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Older women who live alone: an interpretive approach to bridging the gap between lived experiences and policy discourses

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Bibliographic citation

Forbes, JH (2011). Older women who live alone: an interpretive approach to bridging the gap between lived experiences and policy discourses. University Of Tasmania. Thesis. <https://doi.org/10.25959/23211152.v1>

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Appendix 1 – Interview forms and questions

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESIDENTS

THE HOUSING EXPERIENCES OF SINGLE OLDER WOMEN: AN INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

CHIEF INVESTIGATOR Dr Keith Jacobs

INVESTIGATOR Jan Forbes

My name is Jan Forbes. I am investigating the housing experiences of single older women under the supervision of Dr Keith Jacobs. The project is being undertaken to fulfil the requirements for a Ph. D. in Sociology and has received ethical approval from the University Human Research Ethics Committee.

I want you to tell me about your housing experiences, what is better and worse than you had expected and in what ways your housing might be improved in the future. With your consent I would like to record the interview on audio tape temporarily, to assist with the accuracy of the interview transcript. At the end of the interview I will ask some factual questions about yourself and where you live to assist with the analysis of the information. The findings will be used to propose some new housing options for Tasmania and Australia.

AIM

The study aims to identify links between housing and other aspects of people's lives and seeks to provide resident input into future housing policies and provision.

THE APPROACH

The approach assumes that interviews with residents can contribute to knowledge about their housing. It involves asking a number of open-ended questions designed to elicit your views about your housing, followed by about twenty factual questions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will be kept confidential. A sequential number will be used to code the transcript of interview, which will be stored separately from your name. Information that could lead to your being identified will not be used in reports or publications.

CONSENT

Please ask me to explain any of the questions and feel free to refuse to answer questions or to end the interview at any time. If you have any questions or concerns about the interview you can telephone:

Jan Forbes, Ph. D. Candidate on 0409 947 019; email: jgforbes@bigpond.com

Keith Jacobs, Chief Investigator on (03) 6226 2928; email: Keith.Jacobs@utas.edu.au

A/Professor, Margaret Otlowski, Chair, Southern Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (03) 6226 2763

Executive Officer, Southern Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee on (03) 62 262763

TIME COMMITMENT

The time commitment is approximately one hour, comprising a taped interview of about forty-five minutes and a survey of about fifteen minutes.

SURVEY RESULTS

If want to know the findings from the survey, please contact either the Chief Investigator or Ph. D. candidate at the telephone numbers or email addresses above.

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CONSENT FORM FOR RESIDENTS

No. :

I, First Name Last Name.....

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study aims to identify links between housing and other aspects of people's lives and will involve the following procedures: an open ended interview of about forty-five minutes and a survey of about fifteen minutes.
4. I understand that all research data will be treated as anonymous and confidential.
5. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
6. I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a subject.
7. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without prejudice.

Signature

Date:.....

I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigator

Signature of investigator

Date

Appendix 1 – Interview forms and questions

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR RESIDENTS

Before we start, I'd like you to choose a first name that I can use when I write about what you've told me.

Start the tape.

1. How long have you lived here?
2. Where did you live/can you tell me about where you lived before you moved here?

Prompt: What led to your current housing situation?

3. What do you like about living here?
4. What don't you like about living here?
5. Is where you live now different from what you expected when you first moved in?

Prompts: What is worse than you expected?

What is better than you expected?

6. Tell me about your neighbours.

Prompts: What are your neighbours like?

How well do you know them?

Are they friendly? Do people here help each other?

7. Are you planning/do you want to make any changes to your housing in the future?

Prompts: Are you planning any changes, major repairs or renovations?

Would the changes make it easier for you to stay here?

8. In what (other) ways might your housing (situation) be improved?

Are you planning to sell your current home?

Do you ever think about moving to a retirement unit?

Or to some other form of congregate or 'community' housing?

9. What is likely to/would influence any changes you might make to your housing?

10. What does growing older here mean to you?

Appendix 1 – Interview forms and questions

SURVEY FORM FOR RESIDENTS

Identification number: _____

Pseudonym: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

1. Length of time at current residence: _____

2. Age: _____ [Date of birth: ____ / ____ / ____]

3. Age Group: 65 to 74 years []
 75 to 84 years []
 85 or older []

4. Country of birth:
 Other [] _____

5. Language spoken at home:
 Other [] _____

6. Post code of primary residence: _____

7. Marital status
 Never married []
 Married []
 De facto []

Separated []
 Divorced []
 Widowed []
 Other []

8. Weekly, fortnightly or annual income: _____

Under \$6239 []
 \$6240 to \$20799 []
 \$20800 to \$41599 []
 \$41600 to \$51999 []
 Over \$52000 []

9. Main source of income:
 Age pension []
 Disability pension []
 Unemployment benefits []
 Paid work []
 Self employed []
 Supported by spouse []
 Superannuation []
 Veterans Affairs pension []
 Other, please specify []

Appendix 1 – Interview forms and questions

10. Occupation:

If retired, main work you used to do?

- Unskilled []
 - Semi-skilled []
 - Technical []
 - Professional []
 - Please specify []
-

11. Highest level of education completed/Year left school _____

- Did not complete primary school []
 - Completed primary school []
 - Completed high school []
 - Matriculation []
 - Completed a certificate []
 - Completed a diploma []
 - Completed a degree []
 - Completed a postgraduate qualification []
 - Other, please specify []
-

12. Health over the past month:

- Excellent []
- Very good []
- Good []
- Fair []
- Poor []

13. Which of the following best describes how you feel:

- I never feel lonely []
- I hardly ever feel lonely []
- I feel lonely sometimes []
- I feel lonely often []
- I feel lonely most of the time []

14. Membership of organisations:

- Church []
- Social club []
- Sporting club []
- Welfare organisation []
- Artistic or cultural []

On average how many times per week are you involved in one or more organised activities?

15. Type of accommodation:

- Home unit []
- Villa unit []
- House on block []
- Other, please specify []

Appendix 1 – Interview forms and questions

15a. Purchasing []/fully owned [] Fortnightly repayments: _____

16. Neighbourhood:

- Inner city []
- Suburban []
- Urban fringe []
- Large town []
- Small town []
- Rural community []
- Remote rural []

Other, please specify [] _____

17. How do you feel about where you're living now?

- Very happy []
- Happy []
- Satisfied []
- Unhappy []
- Very unhappy []

18. Do you have trouble with transport?

- Yes []
- No []

19. Main form of transport?

- Own car []
- Taxi []
- Bus []
- Driven by friend or relative []

Other, please specify: _____

20. If car owner, make and year: _____

21. Do you have a telephone?

- Yes []
- No []

22. On average, how often do you speak to someone on the phone each week?

23. Do you have a disability?

- Yes []
- No []

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If yes, please specify: _____

24. Do you need help to get around? Yes [☐] No [☐]

If yes, please specify below.

25. Type of help needed: _____

26. Social network

- No social network [☐]
 - Has some social contacts [☐]
 - Rich network of friends [☐]
 - Other, please specify [☐]
-

27. Closeness to own children

- No children or distant from them all [☐]
 - Likes them but does not see them often [☐]
 - Close to/sees at least one child often [☐]
 - Other, please specify [☐]
-

28. Relationship with siblings

- No siblings or poor relations [☐]
 - Likes them but does not see them often [☐]
 - Good relations with at least one sibling [☐]
 - Other, please specify [☐]
-

29. Confiding relationship

- No confidante [☐]
 - Only paid support worker [☐]
 - At least one active confidante [☐]
 - Other, please specify [☐]
-

30. Do you use the Internet? Yes [☐] No [☐]

Appendix 1 – Interview forms and questions

Living relatives/social network (children, grandchildren, siblings, parents)

Relationship	Gender	Age	Location	Transaction

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WORKERS

1. Firstly, I'd like to take down some details about your work background, such as any previous training you may have had and the length of time you have been working in this area.
2. What are the key policy objectives of your organisation in relation to housing provision for older people?
3. What do you regard as the most pressing issues in relation to older people's housing at the present time?
4. What are the key housing needs of older people, bearing in mind the needs of single older women in particular?
5. What do older people in general, and single older women in particular, want from their housing?
6. How well does current housing provision cater for older people's needs, and in particular for the needs of single older women?
7. What sorts of housing works well for older people and for single older women in particular?
8. In what ways could current housing provision be improved so that it better meets older people's needs and the needs of single older women in particular?
9. What key changes can you see happening in older people's housing in the future?
10. Are there any questions I've not asked yet that you think I should have asked or any other people that you think I should talk to? If so, could please tell me about them.

APPENDIX 2:

TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH THE RESIDENTS

Residents' conversations are in Italics.

Interviewer's conversations are in regular case.

Deletions and comments are in brackets, in regular case.

Key to interviewees

	Type of house/ tenure	LOR ¹	Location	Place of birth	Age	Housing satisfaction	Pages
Interviewee 2	Semi-detached / fully owned	40	Suburban	Australia	70	Unhappy	5-21
Interviewee 3	Villa unit/ fully owned	17	Suburban	Scotland	62	Happy	22-26
Interviewee 4	House/purchasing	17	Suburban	Australia	54	Satisfied	27-35
Interviewee 5	Villa unit/ fully owned	5	Suburban	Australia	72	Satisfied	36-45
Interviewee 6	House/ fully owned	59	Suburban	Australia	7	Happy	46-61
Interviewee 7	House/ fully owned	44	Suburban	Austria	70	Satisfied	62-75
Interviewee 8	House/ fully owned	52	Suburban	Yugoslavia	77	Satisfied	76-99
Interviewee 9	House/ fully owned	30	Small town	Australia	86	Happy	100-113
Interviewee 10	House/ fully owned	50	Small town	Australia	75	Very happy	114-125
Interviewee 11	House/ fully owned	14	Suburban	Australia	72	Satisfied	126-145
Interviewee 12	House/ fully owned	20	Suburban	Ukraine	79	Happy	146-165
Interviewee 13	Villa unit/ fully owned	15	Suburban	England	71	Happy	166-186
Interviewee 14	House/ fully owned	54	On a farm	Australia	84	Very happy	187-207
Interviewee 15	House/ fully owned	15	Small town	England	82	Very happy	208-223
Interviewee 16	House/ fully owned	59	Suburban	Australia	87	Happy	224-255
Interviewee 17	House/	42	Small	Australia	76	Satisfied	256-291

¹ Length of residence, in years

	fully owned		town				
Interviewee 18	House/ fully owned	62	Small town	Australia	82	Very happy	292-321
Interviewee 19	House/ fully owned	19	Suburban	England	70	Very happy	322-340
Interviewee 20	House/ fully owned	35	Suburban	Yugoslavi a	78	Unhappy	341-374
Interviewee 21	House/ fully owned	10	Small town	England	73	Happy	375-400
Interviewee 22	House/ fully owned	29	Small town	Australia	82	Very happy	401-424
Interviewee 23	Villa unit/ lifetime lease	2	Suburban	Australia	73	Happy	425-451
Interviewee 24	House/ fully owned	28	On a farm	Australia	77	Very happy	452-482
Interviewee 25	House/ fully owned	31	On a small acreage	Australia	70	Happy	483-496
Interviewee 26	House/ fully owned	33	Suburban	Australia	59	Happy	497-531
Interviewee 27	House/ fully owned	10	Suburban	Australia	72	Very happy	532-559
Interviewee 28	Villa unit/strat um title with deferred managem ent fee	16	Suburban	England	82	Very happy	560-584
Interviewee 29	Villa unit/ public housing	4	Suburban	Australia	64	Unhappy	585-613
Interviewee 30	Villa unit/ public housing	1	Small town	England	65	Very happy	614-653
Interviewee 31	Villa unit/ lifetime lease	3	Small town	England	4	Happy	654-681
Interviewee 32	House/ fully owned	13	Suburban	England	72	Very happy	682-717

Interviewee 33	Abbeyfield bedsitter/ lifetime lease	3	Suburban	England	82	Very happy	718-754
Interviewee 34	House/ fully owned	2	Suburban	England	72	Very happy	755-791
Interviewee 35	Villa unit/ cohousing	4	Suburban	Australia	53	Very happy	792-824
Interviewee 36	House/ fully owned	35	Suburban	New Zealand	65	Satisfied	825-862

Interviewee 2

Can you tell me about where you used to live before you moved here?

I lived in [name of suburb deleted] for a short while before I had my eldest son, [name deleted]. And we were told by this lady that once he started to crawl or walk, crawl actually, we would have to move. So that's all right. That was quite an experience with her ... You don't want to hear about that do you?

So you've been here a very long time, and you came here when your children were small?

No. They were both born here. We arrived here a week before Christmas and [name deleted] was born in May, so I was already expecting him. We landed up in the top, in Devonport and I always remember they were actually very nice to us. There was a chap with a utility who got all our boxes and things and put them in, and that was our introduction to Tasmania and that was rather pleasant.

So that was before you lived in [name of suburb deleted]? You came to Tasmania from somewhere else?

Actually from Queensland to Sydney, and then moved to ... I was married in Sydney, moved to Melbourne and while we were there [husband's name deleted]'s aunt and uncle, they had six children, four daughters, and they came down from Mount Isa and anyway they stayed there just briefly and they were going to Tasmania. So they came over to Tasmania and then they got in contact with [name deleted] and said come over here

So [name deleted] was your husband?

Yes, [husband's name deleted].

And your son is [name deleted]? [The same name as her husband's, followed by his nickname.]

Just [name deleted]. Yeah. He was christened [name deleted] but he likes to be called [name deleted]. When he was little he was called [name deleted], which is the Dutch.

So your husband is Dutch? Oh, [name deleted], of course!

[Husband's name deleted] is a German name I think, but he was Dutch and he [inaudible] blonde ... Well [husband's name deleted] had black curly hair. He wasn't fair.

You must have been here for more than 40 years?

Oh yes.

He was gorgeous [referring to a photo of the son we were talking about]. They are beautiful boys; absolutely beautiful.

Thank you, and any way yeah he had black hair. [Younger son's name deleted] is blonde. [Eldest son's name delete] when he was born had jet-black hair, real black hair and it fell out and then he was blonde but it's become darker.

That's here in about ...

Down the back, yeah, well wait a minute, is it? Yeah down the back. It's faded.

So really where you used to live is not terribly important, because you've been here for such a long time. Not like some people who have recently moved.

Yeah.

And what led to your current housing situation? You said you were pregnant and you knew you had to move and you came here, and did you start buying it straight away?

No, we weren't allowed to, and it was only because the couple next door, he said to [husband's name deleted], they said "We're going to buy our half". So he suggested to [husband's name deleted] that we buy ours, but it was a long time ago anyway. So we actually, because of the couple next door, they were actually Tasmanian, so that's how we started to buy it, pay it off. And then years later they were starting to charge extra for the accounting and all that sort of thing.

The administration fee on the Purchase Contract?

So we decided that we'd pool our money together and we'd pay it off, which we did and so that's how we came to buy it. Much to our shock all the years we'd been paying we had such a little paid off, that was all interest or something.

That's right. They were not a good deal those purchase contracts.

No they were very, very bad.

And they're not doing them anymore ... some people ended up with a debt.

But we thought, oh we'd be better off just paying it off.

So you're in a good position compared to a lot of single older women, in that you fully own your home.

Yes, and of course a lot of people don't realise that at all. They think the Housing owned it.

So how do you feel about that, having people think you're in a Housing Department house?

Do you feel that people look down on you?

To a certain extent some people do. I have some relatives, my mother's sister, her daughter and her husband, that's in Queensland and they're very well off. And they came down they were here and they came and visited us and she said to me: "Oh" she said "We don't associate with people like you that live in Housing Department areas".

That means she won't come back.

No.

How weird. People are just people where ever they live.

Yeah. She just looked down and she didn't know I existed until a few months before.

I've got a cousin coming next weekend I hope she doesn't look down on me. I hope she doesn't look down on people who live in run down old houses.

So, because we lived in a Housing Department and in a house, we weren't good enough for them. I mean she'd been to university and all that and it would have been lovely if I'd been, but I'd been in an orphanage and all that. So yeah, I've always remembered that.

So your parents died?

No my father is dead now and he has been dead for some time but my mother is alive. She put us in that ... oh, I don't want to talk about it. I'm better off not talk about it.

How old were you?

About nine.

She just couldn't manage?

No. It was the start of the war and she took off. She put us in the orphanage and then she went down to Brisbane, down to Sydney. So by the time ...

Your father was in the war?

No, he tried to enlist but he had something wrong with his heart and he wasn't accepted, but anyway.

So your mother's still alive?

Oh yes.

How old's she?

Now I'm 70, 71 this year, 81, she'd be 89, 18 years older than me.

So she was very young when she had you.

Yeah, so ...

You've got siblings?

I have four brothers, all younger than me. And when I was about five or six she told me she didn't like little girls, she only liked little boys and I remember standing on the chair washing the dishes in the sink and tears pouring out of my eyes, falling down into the dish water [laughing]; and yeah ...

Gee people say some funny things, and sometimes the things they say, they often don't even mean them. They're just mixed up about things. My mother has said some terrible things to me. I can't believe she really meant them.

I couldn't believe or accept that she didn't want me. She didn't want anything to do with me and I tried.

So what about the boys? Did she put the boys in the orphanage?

Oh yeah. And then she had [name deleted].

By someone else?

And then a few years later she had two more boys, and she ended up marrying their father but oh ...

She couldn't have had too bad a life if she's still alive.

She always looked after number one [laughs]; always, yeah.

Do you have contact with her?

I did, but I found out in the end, I had to accept I was better not being in contact. She actually liked to gamble and when I was with her, I'd find money and things had disappeared.

So she lived a high life?

And she can't go past ... they have those kiosks where they sell these scratchies, everywhere scattered on the mainland. And she couldn't ...

Waiting for her number to come up?

And she couldn't go past one of those, so I was a big disappointment to her.

Well you're lucky you turned out all right, because with a mother like that you could have all gone the same way.

God! I don't think I had much to do with her anyway. I was with my father's family once I came out of the orphanage and my granny.

How old were you then?

Fourteen.

In those days it was old enough to leave home.

And when I was sixteen my father took my brothers out, and took me to look after them, so that was for some time, and then I left but my grandmother, my mother's mother I didn't even know. She was in Rockhampton, and she died. She was only 58. I was at Gran's and this telegram arrived and I couldn't work it out because my Gran was standing there beside me and I had forgotten about this other one.

It said your grandmother had died?

Yes [laughing]. Any way [name deleted] was out riding, checking on cattle and things like that, so when she came back we told her. We gave it to her. And anyway so we told her, so we got ready and we went into Rockhampton because we, they were out in the country, and we went to the funeral and I didn't know my mother.

She was there and you didn't know who she was?

She was at the old people's home and my grandmother was still there, but she had passed away or whatever. And anyway, there was two women and my mother was the eldest, so I looked at these two women. I was told to go and give my mother a kiss, and I looked at these two women, and I didn't know who was my mother! So, I picked the oldest looking [voice drops].

And you were right?

No. I was wrong. So she pushed me away, and she said I'm not your mother. That's your mother there.

So you picked the oldest looking and it wasn't your mother. That was justice for your mother.

And then later on she asked me, and I told her, I knew you were the eldest and I picked the oldest looking lady, and well she thought it was wonderful.

She was flattered.

And I looked at her, and I thought, well you don't see the tragedy.

She was just a vain person.

Yeah. Silly!

I couldn't imagine having one of my children not knowing me.

Yeah. And I mean to me, I would have fought tooth and nail to keep my two sons. I mean, and I just don't understand a woman like that. I really don't

There's nothing more important in the whole world than your children. It's what your life's all about.

So that's how I came to leave Rockhampton and go to Brisbane, to her, and Gran said years later, if only I'd known I'd never have let you go, because ... oh I don't want to even talk about it.

So how old were you then?

About 18.

Such an impressionable age.

Yeah.

[Conversation deleted.]

And is your current housing situation different from what you expected in life? Did you have other expectations?

In some respects I did. I would have loved to live in the country.

And you don't feel you've had a lot of choice?

No, definitely not a lot of choice.

So you made this decision, you were eligible for public housing, you were renting and you needed housing. You applied and you got in. And was this convenient to your husband's work?

He used to go by train into Hobart. I can remember there wasn't any sealed roads or anything, and any cars or anything that went past, the dust would come in even though the doors and windows were shut

and you were constantly having to clean, and then when you had yards of soil on your shoes and on the pram, I used to clean it all. And you had to walk up near the first lot of shops to get the bus, and then you had to walk down that way to get a train, and I preferred to go to the train.

So where did you shop?

Well we were buying our groceries in Hobart and we went there for a while.

So you didn't have a car?

No.

And do you have a car now?

No. Strange but my husband wasn't interested in having a car and I couldn't understand it because we could have you know, taken the boys on outings. But we used to walk up in the hills there and take a picnic. That was the only thing that we could do.

So you would have got to know the hills pretty well?

Yeah. Just in there. We'd go as far as the little creek.

So what did your husband do? Could he have afforded a car?

I don't know. He worked. He didn't have a job when we were expecting [elder son's name deleted] and then he had a part time job working at the hospital.

As a trolley porter or something like that?

No. I'm not sure. And he ended up getting a job finally in the [name deleted] Department as the Cashier.

So that's a reasonable job.

Yeah.

So then he had security because he was in the public service.

Yes.

So then you've got a pension from that?

Part-pension. He was always saying he didn't get the right money for his job. He did a lot of work to try and get better ... They weren't paying him enough for the job they were doing or something like that, so he never ever did do that, but I think the man that took his job after he died, he got the benefit.

So he was still working when he died?

He was off sick and then on half-pay for quite a while, which was quite hard.

So this was cancer that he died of? How old was he?

Fifty-eight, I think.

So how long have you been on your own?

Oh, over 20 years I think?

So you were close in age?

I was about five years younger, yeah.

So about half your time here almost you've been on your own. I don't know whether you found it small, when you had your kids here, and husband here?

Yeah.

But it would be a lovely size for a single older person.

Yes.

Not too much to look after.

No, not too much to look after and the bedroom is the best one, the one we had added on, that is the best one in the house because of the plaster walls.

So you've made it three-bedroom?

It's not. We did but then, when the boys left we turned the second one into a dining room.

And that's nice to have a dining room.

Yeah, but at the moment it's got stuff [laughing] ...

A junk room? I've got rooms like that at home too.

And so's the other one! I'm starting on getting stuck into things again.

It's easy to just shove things away and forget about them when you live on your own.

I get a whirlwind of tidying up and that, but I'm going to get rid of a few things.

And so what don't you like about living here? I know you've told me about this before on the phone [about issues with her neighbours] but it would be nice to capture it on tape.

Well the mere fact that someone was poisoning my plants and trees and banging on the wall at night and when I've fallen asleep again, bang, bang, bang. And [sigh] I thought well, there's no use going to the police because well what can they do?

You've got to have evidence haven't you?

Yeah.

It can be very hard when people want to be a nuisance.

I know who's behind it all but I can't name names and I just find it incredible, the things that were done, just to get me out of this house [laughing].

So they wanted to buy this place?

No, no. I think they wanted the Housing to hand it over to them.

But you own it. Once they knew you owned it, did it stop?

That last time I came back, yes it sort of stopped but Boxing Day, that night, when I came out the next morning there was this most terrible odour on the back steps and I hosed and hosed for over an hour trying to get rid of it. And it was on the lemon tree on one side and on the other side of that.

Did it poison them?

I don't think so. I don't know what it was but I haven't been able to use the mint and ...

So how long ago was this?

That was Boxing Day, that night that, that was done on the back porch, but before that I'd come back ...

It's a wonder you're not half crazy. I would take it very hard.

I did. I was stunned when I came back and found that it had been ring barked across the back.

Ring barked? A tree?

The one on that side was really ring barked to make sure, and I'd kept thinking for the last couple of years, there's something odd about that tree, and I realised the top had been cut out of it when I'd been away. And then the others [that were ring barked] were sort of token ... but one of the other pine trees there, I think that's slowly dying.

So it's your neighbours here? And they own this one here? So the people next door didn't end up buying it. Did they hand their purchase contract back.

No she's only been in there three years.

So you said your neighbour was going to buy it.

No. No.

They didn't buy it?

No. They've moved years ago. [Names deleted], they did buy it and I think ... I don't know whether the Housing must have taken it back. They moved up in [name deleted] Street. They bought a house there, brick. Then [name deleted] died and [name deleted], she must have sold it and moved out.

So they were a similar age to you?

Yes.

And it is public housing next door?

Yes, because there have been quite a few people in there since.

This woman [inaudible] ...

I've literally given it away. Friends of mine had come to check on the place at the back and they couldn't believe when they saw it'd all been ... So [name deleted] had rung my son, [name deleted], in Brisbane and I was out at the time and she told him what has happened. So they decided they weren't going to tell me because it would upset me. So I came home and I didn't know anything about it until the next morning and I was literally in shock.

And this was when your power had been turned off?

No, that was two years before. When I came back that time the power had been turned off. I couldn't claim insurance on my refrigerator and freezer contents because I was away more than 60 days.

So when you came back you're saying, they'd ring barked things out the back?

This was the last time. And anyway so the sensor light was dangling down, oh and incidentally the bulbs were all gone from the back as well, and it was all hanging down ...

You'd have to be desperate wouldn't you?

I started putting my name on the bulbs, [her name deleted], but I don't know whether that does any good.

They could rub it off.

Yeah, but any way so that stayed like that until just before I went away last year. And I had it fixed, but oh, and then the back shed where my cats sleep at night. In all the years I've been here that's never flooded and it was flooded and it had this much water inside.

Were the cats in there?

I had to keep the cats up here for a few nights.

So you shut the cats up at night?

Yes, because I don't believe in them roaming around being a nuisance.

I shut mine up too because I went on a walk at the [name deleted] Reserve and the Ranger said if you keep your cats in at night it reduces their territory by two thirds and they kill less wildlife.

But anyway, and I didn't even realise all this and when it rains on the dividing fence to the steps on that side, it's just flooded and then last time, about the when the power was all turned off, I had trouble with the toilet and all that sort of thing. I had to get the plumber in and he found three condoms, three condoms and, I mean I just couldn't believe it. I just thought they were balloons or something. He showed me.

Well whoever did it must have known they would block the pipe. I wouldn't have thought of it.

And I mean to do something like that, it's unbelievable. And of course she'd said to me a few days before I got back that the concrete, you know the inspection, you know whatsername, was up in the air and water going up in the air and it must have been the flow back in the pipes, from the condoms, and she said you want to go and see the council about it and complain, and she kept saying that to me and in the end I thought oh, why not, and silly me I go to the council, and say about it and they must have thought I was going gaga or something when I think about it. I actually went to the council and that hadn't happened at all, but of course they didn't tell me that.

She just said it, but it hadn't happened?

Yeah. I couldn't work it out. I unfortunately have two of them in my yard and I didn't think, how is it that one's up and this one wasn't. But I went to the Council. I don't know. But they were good when finally three weeks after I came back, I went to the police about the trees and then I also went to the council, and they came out and took photos and all and said they would really like to have evidence because there's a big fine. And those trees when they get to a certain height and width ...

You're not supposed to. It's illegal to do anything with them?

And that's what they've done.

A tree protection order ... Sounds like she's out to get you, if she says things like that.

Yeah. But anyway not only that, when that happened, that terrible smell, I got so angry.

So is it happening still now? Are you getting problems still?

Just the occasionally ... the odd thing ... the banging. Oh, I can't say it's them but, there's odd things; or suddenly a plant dies overnight, things like that.

Because they know this is not public housing ...

[Conversation deleted.]

She said to me, and I didn't wake up, when I was in the front a few times, she said to me about, oh, we're going to do this, that was in my front you see; we're going to do this to the garden and it's going to look really lovely, really beautiful. And the other time she said about the winter jasmine, that's the yellow thing that the daughter was going to train it up between the two places. And friends said to me, you know, they've been trying to get you out of this place.

Well they're stupid people.

Yeah, and she said to me a few times oh [inaudible] sorry, shouldn't mention names, will be moving into her place before Christmas. And of course she put up that bit of latticework. I notice if I'm out the front the curtains are all drawn. They can't see me and when I'm in the back the blinds are down. So I shouldn't laugh, but ... And of course, the sun comes in there on the verandah.

What do you like about living here?

Well sometimes I'd like to be far away from here, because of all this. It's not very nice with that atmosphere next door. I mean I'd rather everything was, you know, just say hullo, goodbye, that sort of

thing, but you know [inaudible]. I've had to accept a lot of things and I don't want to be bitter. I don't want to be vindictive or nasty, nothing like that at all.

You don't want to be forced out of here. In fact, what's happened has spoilt it for you, living here?

Yes. Because I've had no problems with anyone else and I don't think I've been a problem to anyone either.

That's a dishonest person too next door because if you knew what she was on about you could have let her know, I own this place, getting me out is not going to get it for your daughter. And the thing is they wouldn't have got it for her daughter, even if it was public housing.

Well, see I was coming up the back path to the steps and they were on the other side and I said incidentally I own this lock stock and barrel. If I ever decide to move I'll make sure you don't get the house. I was so angry [laughs].

Housing won't want it back, once you own it out right.

I thought they were buying places to put homeless people into.

Occasionally they buy back their own, so I suppose there is a possibility. They know they're solidly built.

And I didn't finish that, about that terrible smell. I was so angry. I put in to the Council about the trees. I was angry to think that would ... I feel, knowing what it is all about now, I feel a lot better in myself and I'm determined. No-one's forcing me out. I will go when I want to move and just on the quiet, I want to move eventually. I want to.

So, this is a pipedream I know, but if there was a group of single older women; who were wanting to put their assets into doing some congregate housing and if there was a subsidy to help them if they couldn't do it out right. I mean would you be interested in something like that?

Probably, but I'm thinking of the mainland.

Would you go to Brisbane?

No, I was thinking of going to NSW, half way between the two, between here and Brisbane so you could travel to both.

So where is your other son?

Over at [name of suburb deleted].

Oh I see half way between here and Brisbane, so you could travel to both.

Yeah.

But [name deleted] doesn't have any kids?

Yes, [name deleted, does have kids]. [Elder son's name deleted] *doesn't.*

Oh [younger son's name deleted] is the eldest.

No the youngest.

So [elder son's name deleted] doesn't. Do you think they will?

Doesn't look like it. A lot of people are making that choice these days. As [elder son's name deleted] said, when you see how some children ...

What sort of life they have?

How some of them behave and all that sort of thing.

Well it's a social problem in a way, because of the social dislocation, because people don't have extended families.

Yeah.

And I think it's very hard to bring children up in isolation. They need a lot of people around.

Well little [grandson's name deleted], we speak every Saturday on the phone. We take a turn about. I speak to them in Brisbane and they speak to me. And little [grandson's name deleted] says grandma can't you get on a plane and come up here, I miss you, because I've been up there for three months, three and a half months during winter, but ...

You don't want to go for as long again?

No.

Unless you had a house-sitter, but it's very hard to find someone who can come and stay in your place for a short time. There's a house sitters directory now for people who do it professionally. There are some in Tasmania.

But in a way ...

That's how they live and you know they are reputable people and there is some come back if anything happens. So, you say you want to move. This next question sounds like a good question for you then. In what ways might your housing situation be improved? You tell me.

Well I like room.

So what sort of a place would you get?

If, it's only a thought, if I sold, I might even rent.

I know an older woman who's done just that only recently but she's in a very fortunate position. She's sold her house and put the proceeds into an allocated pension and she's renting and this helps her to afford the rent at the moment, but her children are going to buy a house and she is going to rent that and they will negative gear, so she is in a fortunate position.

I'm just undecided.

Because once you rent, depending on where you rent, I mean if you were in a retirement village it would be secure, and you're probably there for life but in the private rental market you don't have security and as you get older you don't want to be shoved around from pillar to post.

Well I'll tell you this; I have relatives who are really well off. My aunt had a nursing home, a really flash one and that incidentally, that's the cousin ...

Who's too good to be your friend?

Yes, and I would not like to be in, that's why I'm against all those silly things, being in an orphanage, I went round and visited all these ladies in that home and they are not allowed to have a pot plant. Incidentally they've sold it. They got out of it. But they weren't allowed to have a pot plant and they couldn't wear their jewellery. I suppose they're frightened that it'd be stolen so it had to be in a safe. Every so often, they had a wardrobe, chest of drawers and that, but every so often the staff would come in and go through everything and all that, no privacy like that and they were inclined to take in some patients that other places couldn't cope with.

Ah, so there were some difficult people there?

There were some difficult people put in amongst these other people and one lady, I saw there; she'd get up and go to the toilet and she'd come back and lie straight on top of some poor woman in bed.

She wouldn't know which was her bed?

Yeah, and she had a habit of doing that and upsetting these people and I thought there's no way do I ever want to be in a situation like that.

Well hopefully they are improving but I suppose in Australia they're not that good but there are new standards and they are trying to improve it.

Well that was really a very posh home and it is unbelievable.

So the people were in wards? Like, there was four beds in one ward?

Yes or two beds, and things like that.

I don't know why people have to share. I don't think it's right, when they don't know these people, to have to share with strangers.

Yeah, but that's what some of these ladies said to me, oh I'd love to have a pot plant but matron says I can't have it and I thought, the poor dears it would give them great joy. Oh it's too messy. But so what, if they're at the end of their lives so to speak, why can't they have a little bit of happiness, a pot plant or a bunch of flowers or things like that.

I like pot plants.

Yeah.

What is likely to influence any future changes you might make to your housing situation?

Oh it would be fantastic if I was given some money [laughing].

So that's the main thing that stops you from doing what you want to do, is money?

Yes, more or less, because I get a part pension and part super and that's it. So you know I've been careful. My one vice is buying books.

So where do you keep your books?

I've got them in the bedroom. I have a bookcase in the bedroom and a desk.

So what is likely to influence the changes you might make to your housing?

To my housing? Well, friendship. What I mean by that is that, people around that aren't nasty and well, they care about everybody and you care about everybody.

You'd like to live in a neighbourhood like that and if you could find somewhere like that you'd like to move?

Yes. It's a pipe dream. There are a lot of women in even worse situations. I know that I have a lot to be thankful for, a roof over my head, enough food and things like that, provided people don't ...

It must be hard with your lovely garden, to lose the plants

I've lost a lot of trees and a lot of plants

Especially established trees; they haven't touched the trees out the front?

No those they hadn't. No wait a minute. When you go out look at the gum trees; they've got saw marks [laughing], so evidently the idea was to get rid of those.

To ring bark them as well?

Yeah

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 3

Can you tell me about where you used to live before you moved here?

Yes, not very far away; just a couple of streets away. I've been in this house 17 years. I've enjoyed living here.

And what led to your current housing situation?

My husband and I, I was married at the time, the house we were in was too big for us. Our children had left home. Because we were working, so this was ideal.

Is your current housing different from what you expected?

No. It's been exactly what I hoped for.

What is worse than you expected about living here?

No, no, there is; the fact that it's stratum title, body corporate. I haven't lived in that kind of situation before. Where you have neighbours living nearby who have to consult you before things are done; living in very close proximity, at times it can be very difficult.

What's better than you expected?

Almost the same thing; living in close proximity to my neighbours. There are several over the years who, I have become very close to them

What do you like about living here?

Hard question because I've lived in this area for just over 30 years

So, hard to separate living in this area compared to living in [name of suburb deleted]?

Living in this area as compared to living in the other house or just living in the [name deleted] area?

I mean this house, what do you like about living in this house.

There's a closeness to the beach, and there's a walk way just down the end of the street that takes me ... I like the idea of lying in bed and hearing the waves breaking on the rocks below, that's nice. Close to everything else, the post office, all those things are really close, are within walking distance.

What don't you like about living here?

That can be hard. I mean if you've got a good group of people there isn't necessarily any problem in that way and for the first twelve years that's how it was. It was really good.

So a group of people who can work in together?

Yes. It's really important. Yes, because one person can disrupt the whole lot.

And you have no choice about who comes in.

No, none. It's forced us into a position where we've had to take on a manager for the body corporate, rather than manage it on our own which would be quite a simple thing to do but because a manager would have that much more authority, professional authority. He knows what he's doing et cetera, legally and so on. We've given him the upkeep of the surrounds.

Can you tell me a bit about the problems you have had with these problem neighbours?

Well parking. We've asked them on numerous occasions not to park in the main part up here, as when you come out you need to back in. They are allowing their visitors to come in and park where it makes it difficult, in fact impossible at times. They had to be asked, would they please come out and shift their cars; very inconsiderate.

You're lucky not to be part of it [as a result of living in the front unit].

It doesn't affect me really. It is the other two people it affects.

There's only four houses?

There are also visitors who come up that driveway at high speeds, which you are not supposed to do, and there have been close calls at times because when I back out of my driveway I can't see them coming.

What do you think the problem is; a class difference or a cultural difference?

It's a single lady and she came here with a chip on her shoulder. It appeared that she didn't want to get along with anyone. We were making her as comfortable as we possibly could, but I shouldn't make judgements on her

Who are the visitors?

Her friends, who came to visit and her daughter ... who came to visit, with her boyfriend.

The ones who were driving fast?

Yes.

It must have been hard for her coming in here with three other households who were all really good friends.

They all came in at different times and we all got on together as people arrived. I mean the same thing could have happened for her if she'd allowed it to happen, but she was so defensive about everything and refused to take responsibility when anything happened. Like one of her visitors came backing out and backed into the fencing between the next door and us, down the side of the driveway. I was standing in the kitchen when it happened, washing dishes, and I heard the crack so I ran out to see what had happened. Just as this person ... I went to her door immediately and said your visitor has broken the fence and she said nothing to do with me, wasn't me, I didn't do it. So didn't want to take any responsibility and didn't.

For her visitors, and legally she would be responsible.

Yes.

So did the manager deal with that for you?

At that time we didn't have a manager and this was one of the things that led us to getting a manager.

What did you do to deal with that at that particular time?

We asked her would she please get it fixed. She didn't. And so the manager came along and he arranged, so we all paid for it.

That must have created some bad feeling.

Well it did, but there was also another situation between the last person who was in her house leaving and her moving in, we had to get a plumber in to clear the drains; something that happens every three or four years because of the trees, huge willows.

Is there a tree preservation order?

These particular willows aren't banned so they're allowed to grow. They're Chilean. There is nothing we could do about it. I went ahead and paid, because I was the one who was home the whole time. I paid for the whole thing and when I produced the bill to her she wasn't interested.

She doesn't seem to understand her responsibilities as a member of the body corporate.

Even when the manager tried to get the money from her, she refused to pay

So it hasn't been worth the legal fees?

It was here.

Lacking in community spirit

Yes, yes! Of course once someone does a couple of things like that, you are very wary of them because you don't know ...

You feel you can't trust them.

And there's been other things too; some of her visitors have been drunk and abusive. [Pause.]

In what ways could your housing situation be improved?

I'm sure this is an area you want me to go into. I would probably be very happy to stay here if it were possible for me to afford the upkeep. The outside of the unit needs painting and the inside of the house hasn't been painted since I moved in. The outside is expensive to get done, and there's quite a number of things around the house that need fixing. It's a climate with the prices of houses going up and it's going to be just as expensive to buy somewhere ...

But you might be able to get something less costly to maintain.

Yes. So I've been looking at that for some time but I haven't been able to bring myself to sell this place.

Because it's so nice?

Yes, yes.

What opportunities or obstacles are likely to influence any changes you might make?

If I could find somewhere that was cheaper and had some money, but I'll never have that. I will always be scrabbling to pay everything and there never will be an excess. So if I could finish paying my car, which is not going to last forever ...

So how old is your car?

It's a 1995; the bodywork wasn't bad, so I'm just hoping it will last.

In fifteen years everything starts to go wrong ... If we think of anything else ...

For the first time in twelve years I was going to go on holiday ...

[Talk of personal issues deleted.]

I like to have time on my own. I like living here but it gives me a lot of stress, the fact that I can't do the things I need to do, for the upkeep.

[Interview ended.]

Interviewee 4

Can you tell me about where you used to live before you moved here?

I rented a place from my sister [name deleted] and her husband [name deleted] in [name of suburb deleted] because I ... Can I talk about the reason why I didn't have a house?

It's up to you. [She had been a business partner with her former husband who had a drinking problem. He had gone bankrupt and they had lost their house.]

I couldn't afford to buy a house so I rented a property in [name of suburb deleted] in [name deleted] Street. It was convenient to the city and to school, my daughter, [name deleted], was attending [name deleted] High School and that was ... yeah ... So I rented there and prior to that I rented in [name deleted] Street in New Town. I was never terribly settled because I always felt that it wasn't my place to do things so I always felt a little bit beholden to the people that I rented off especially my sister. I wasn't comfortable renting off my sister and her husband really.

You're a pretty independent person.

And I felt that what ever I did I should ask them and it was not a comfortable situation.

And what led to your current housing situation?

Well I was fortunate or unfortunate enough to be made redundant from the [name deleted]. It seemed to be quite a horrible thing at the time but it turned out to be my opportunity to own a home in the end.

How long ago was that?

'97, and I didn't think I'd ever own my own home again. However another lady I worked with, [name deleted]; she always said it was yin and yang that I would get another house of my own and it seemed really important because of the circumstances that I lost my house seemed ... It seemed so drastic and I'd worked so hard for so long to have a house and security and being able to do things and knowing that I didn't have to answer to people. I think that was really important and I got a redundancy and I was able to buy this house that I'm in now.

Is your current housing situation, now you've been here a few years; is it different from what you expected when you first moved in?

No. I knew that there was a lot of responsibility attached to having another house and I was on my own this time as before when I owned a home it was with a partner, my husband, and I seem to be able to ...

I had him to do things. There are certain things now that I have to pay people now to do but it gives me a much more secure feeling living in a place of my own and not being beholden to people. I have a very independent streak in me where I don't like asking people to do things for me. And I'm quite happy to pay people rather than ask anyone to do things and that's how I felt when I was renting that I was constantly beholden.

And is there anything about living here that's worse than you expected when you moved in?

I guess not having as much money. I don't, it's the first time I've been without having to support children, now in the last two months and I've always had to be so careful with money and now I probably can do some things I'm not quite ready to because I've had so long being a mother and doing things for children. And that's probably, it's taking a bit of adjustment and I haven't quite got in to doing things for myself yet and that's something that I'm finding, it's harder and harder to do as I get older.

To adjust?

To adjust, and do things for myself because, I've always had to do things. And I'm always being reminded by my eldest daughter that I need to do more for myself because I've always been a mother and to stop being a mother, and start doing things for yourself. And probably now in this house I'm feeling a little bit sort of lonely because I'm thinking suddenly, I've got to do things for myself more. That's the only aspect of actually living in this place; I find at the moment I'm a bit sort of lost.

So if you don't want to be lonely you've got to make contact outside.

Yes. I've got to make it happen but I go through stages where I think, I wonder what it's all about. Now that you've had a home for children and that was the most important thing for security and now they've gone, you wonder what you've actually got this house, what this home ownership is all about.

You think ...

Well basically you're at work paying for this house that you're not in. Sometimes I have to question it but I guess at the end of the day I'd have to go back to renting off someone and feeling as though... so there's something to be said for the security.

And the control ...

Control yeah, over my life, yeah that's one aspect of it.

And stability ...

Yeah

And you can do things in your own home that you couldn't do.

Yeah and it's just an adjustment for me.

And is there anything about living here that is better than you expected when you first moved in?

Yeah well I'm quite happy with the way that I've, I don't know whether it's relevant, but the house itself, I'm happy with the way that it's turned out aesthetically [laughs], you know with the garden and with the inside of the house because it was not so great when I moved in. There are a few aspects of it that were nice, but again I think it's just the control of knowing I've achieved this again after not having had a house between '89 and '97 and always renting. I guess it gives me a feeling that I've achieved something, and under the circumstances I think it's quite a good achievement really.

And what is it that you like most about living here?

I think it's a very comfortable home. I don't particularly like the area but as it becomes more popular I guess I'll like it a bit more. I've always lived in, I shouldn't say it, well they were nicer areas, North Hobart, New Town, West Hobart. It was just this area didn't appeal to me, but as it becomes more popular ...

More gentrified ...

Yes.

Because it's so close to town ...

It is. Yeah but initially I thought it was a bit sort of down the chute a bit, down the ladder a bit.

So you didn't feel so good about that.

No, but I feel okay about it you know.

What do you like most about living here?

What I like most. The house itself really I like the way I've made it. It's comfortable. It's manageable. I don't know that I'd go very well doing another house up.

So you've put a lot into doing it up and it's very, very nice. You must have quite a strong sense of ownership.

I do now, yeah.

And what is it that you like least about living here.

This area probably still. I'm not particularly mad on the location. I'd like to be near the water. That's my ambition.

If you were able to change it, in what ways do you think your housing situation might be improved?

By moving to near the water; I'd love to be able to move. Is that the sort of thing you mean?

Yes, that's exactly it.

I've always wanted to live near the water. I find it very relaxing; and a view of the sea. I just love that.

So if you were to come into some money that's what you would do?

And it's still not out of the question, because I have thought of leaving and going part time next year and actually selling it and buying a little place down on the water. I don't know where.

Were you thinking of Dodges or Primrose Sands?

No Opossum Bay, South Arm

Yeah I like it there but houses are very expensive down there.

Yeah they are, that's the only catch but I was even thinking of buying a block of land and just building a little cottage on it. But I'm a bit reluctant, scared I guess because I've always worked full time and I've never not had responsibility for another person and now I can sort of plan my life to do things for myself.

But you don't think your finances'll go that far.

I've been and seen about it with a financial planner and there's an option there to go part time.

Wouldn't that affect your super though?

I'd have to take all my super, that's the only thing so I'd end up on a little old age pension when I'm sixty five but I'd have to work part time though. I could never stop work until I was sixty-five. It's just all about my re-assessing the situation. It's in the pipeline but nothing definite yet, but yeah if I had a choice and my finances allowed it I'd love to be near the water. Somewhere I could walk on the beach.

What is likely to influence any future changes you might make to your housing?

My health; if my health deteriorated at all it would certainly change the situation inasmuch I probably wouldn't be able to, well I could keep this house but I'd be on a much lower mortgage repayment; it would only be \$50 a week and I could live on that.

So why would that happen?

I'm just saying if my health deteriorated

You'd retire.

I'd leave work and I'd get the majority of my superannuation and I'd pay it off the house and I'd have a small mortgage.

It'd be less than rent.

Fifty dollars a week is manageable no matter what sort of benefit you're on and I think yeah that's the only thing that I could think of that would affect ...

Can you tell me how you feel about growing older?

I don't feel anything about it. I'm not worried about growing older. I just hope that I can do some things that are in my master plan before I get too old to enjoy them. I want to learn to play the piano and I want to go to U3A and hope I'm well enough to do them as I get older and I've got the time. No I'm not worried about getting older at all.

And do you ever think about living in a different sort of living situation, like in communal or congregate or something like a retirement village?

I wouldn't go very well in a communal place because I like my own company and I wouldn't always want to be seeing people. A retirement village?

Well that's one of the ...

That'd be okay because you're self-contained. I suppose you can be self-contained in communal housing.

It depends on the design of it.

I couldn't bear this sort of communal get together thing. I wouldn't like that; no, because I like to be quiet a lot of the time, just with my own thoughts.

I like to be like that too.

It worries me though that I might be coming a bit anti-social though, because I can go weeks without sort of seeing anyone apart from going to work. I can go weeks without catching up with people and sometimes I think, it's all too difficult with my friends that've got problems and I think I'd rather not know about them. So I tend to do the old ostrich thing and stay by myself. No, I don't think I'd go very well, but if I had to I'd obviously have to ...

But that's not something you've given thought to ...

No, not planned it. No.

Other than to think it wouldn't be for you.

Not for me. No. I can see myself in a nursing home though when I'm incapable of looking after myself. I'd much rather that than having my children look after me. I couldn't stand that. I'd much rather professional people look after me than my children. I'd do exactly what Mum did. She had five children and chose to go into [name of nursing home deleted]. Yeah. I wouldn't like to live with either of my kids when I'm older. Yeah I think they need to live their lives the way they ought to lead them too because having an elderly person around the home isn't such a great thing.

Usually a parent, who can't help treating people as though they are still their children.

I wouldn't like to be programmed every day to do things. Come on Mum we'll do this today or that today. At least in the nursing home you have a choice whether you go and join them. You're not railroaded into it. At least Mum wasn't. She thought it was marvellous. She had a choice at [name of nursing home deleted], if she wanted to go and sit and have a sherry at four o'clock she did and if she wanted to sit and read her papers she did.

I suppose they're not all like that.

No. I think it was marvellous down there. They didn't come and jolly her and say come on we're having a party up there today and you should come. She would have just gone shut up

You reckon?

She's a bit like me or I'm a lot like her. She liked her own company sometimes and other times she liked to be with people, and that's just the way you are.

As long as you've got the choice about it.

Yes. She had the choice. I thought it was absolutely marvellous. Might have helped that my sister was on the auxiliary down there and made sure she was all right [Laughing.] But no they seemed to give

them a choice and there were a lot of people like Mum who just wanted to be by themselves sometimes; be with their own thoughts, and that's fine.

It might be a particular thing for women. I mean women. The picture we have of women is that they are people who like relationships and company and have people as friends and talk to friends about things.

I do sometimes and other times I prefer just to keep myself quiet and just work my way through things because I've had to do it and some of my friends are very busy, talk a lot and I can't bear it.

Yeah.

Yeah.

When you've had a lot of stress in your own life and your friends are having stressful things to deal with ...

And they don't want to do it either. My friend is very mentally ill at the moment and has been for a long time. She hasn't rung me for a long time because she wants to be by herself. We had an arrangement where we say okay, you give me a call or she say I'll contact you and that suits me just fine.

So you respect each other's need for space.

Yes. I understand she may want to be on her own or she may want company.

Yeah but you can't always be sure you find this with people you meet. Do you find that you are wary of making new friends for that reason, because you think they might start intruding too much on your life and might not respect your need for space and privacy?

No, when I make friends they just seem to be acquaintances really and that's quite good. People that I work with, and that's good.

I think that's more appropriate when you're older. I mean when you're an adolescent you have best girlfriends but I think that changes when you get older.

Yes. I see looking at [younger daughter's name deleted], it seems really important to her to have lots of contact with her friends.

My daughter's like that.

She says oh I haven't seen [friend's name deleted] for a while or I haven't seen [other friend's name deleted] for a while and she gets all withdrawn if it's not happening, and I said oh you'll sort of

come out of that later on, appreciate friendships. It's all part of being a teenager I think. It's not that I don't care.

My daughter used to do that when she was at home. Spend hours talking to her friends at night. I can't stand talking to people on the phone at night.

I can't either and funnily enough [laughing], I have two friends who talk incessantly on the phone about nothing and I think we could have covered that in the first two minutes and it takes 20 minutes to tell you, and it's just amazing. Actually I've got three friends like it and it's just incredible, it just takes so long to describe something.

Oh that's so interesting.

It's just different personalities. It amuses me really.

[Conversation deleted.]

It's a two way street; talking flat out about yourself for 20 minutes, I don't think it's appropriate really. My grandmother was like that; incessantly. She'd already be starting to say something as you were starting to talk, ready for the next blurt about herself. She was pretty wrapped up in herself, old Gran, but she was very kind.

Interesting

But I also don't like being a burden and that shows through my life, not being a burden to anyone so I don't tend to ring people up and say oh I'm so sick of myself. I'd just rather sit here and think oh bugger it it's a bit lonely here but let's just crack hardy. This morning I woke up and thought it's raining, why I don't just get up and get out of bed and go for a walk, so I did. And I walked in to [suburb name deleted] and once I'd started I was right. I called in to a couple of places and went to [shopping centre name deleted] and I felt fine when I got home.

Yeah.

You've got to make it happen, don't you sometimes? Or I could ring someone up on the phone and spend twenty minutes on the phone saying how miserable I was. It's a choice. You make your own choices.

Yeah. Get out of yourself and sort of open things up.

Yeah.

It's what I've been really enjoying doing lately is just, taking my little dog to Sandy Bay beach and going for a walk on the beach and I much prefer to do that on my own. You have the fresh air and it's just nice to be there and be quiet and just enjoy it.

I'm quite happy here. Sometimes when you look at relationships and you go for a walk and there always seems to be couples everywhere and you're thinking, oh I'd really like to be with someone and then you hear them, nah, nah, nah, like this in the supermarket.

You're locked in.

When you start living together it's the same old scene. I never want to be dependent on a man again. [Section deleted.] I didn't have a life when I was married. It was just like being in prison. I was too scared to say anything too scared to go anywhere. It was just like being in prison. I wasn't allowed to look at anyone. I wasn't allowed to go to the movies. No freedom. On reflection it was just like being in prison. I was deserted when [her eldest] was ten months old, cleaned our house out and left me a tea towel and Dale Carnegie's book on how to win friends and influence people.

[Tape turned off.]

Interviewee 5

Tell me about where you lived before you moved here.

I lived in [inaudible] in Northern Victoria.

Mmm ...

My husband and I were on a farm and he was unable to work due to illness so we shifted and I went back to my profession, which was podiatry. He was on an invalid pension, which they called it then. Then he died eight or nine years after we left the farm. I stayed in the area because I had children at secondary school. I stayed there until they were finished secondary school and then thought I'd move over to Hobart as my mother was then approaching 80 and I'm an only child, so duty lies there. So I came over here. I bought a place after a year or so out in the country where I wanted to set up my own spinning and weaving production. I spend a couple of years in weaving at the weaving school, which they don't have any more. Then I had to come up to Hobart. My house was unoccupied for several years and of course it fell into disrepair and now I've got my son working out there trying to maintain it, getting it up to standard. Whether I go back there to live or stay here in Hobart depends on my health, how my back is but ...

Then ...

I wouldn't be able to manage the stairs and the hills and the general terrain.

So if you could ...

Yeah. I don't like suburbia and my neighbours cannot understand it. My neighbour over the road says you don't mean that. I said I do truly.

So what is it you like about your house? It's at [name of town deleted] isn't it?

I like it because it's isolated. I can go out when I feel I want company. I have plenty of friends who are interested in the same things I am. I don't find much in common with suburban neighbours and you feel like you're living in a gold fish bowl with all the windows around, and you open the window to get fresh air and all you get is somebody's car boom booming up the street and parties over the road and that sort of thing. I just don't like it. I'm an isolate I suppose. My aim at one time was to leave a body of work behind that will identify me. I don't think I'll ever get that done now. I'm still working that way and trying to pass on what I've learned to other people.

This is particularly in weaving?

Not so much in weaving now but in spinning and other sorts of ... because I can't weave with my arm the way it is.

So knitting?

Yeah.

And what led to ...

I think I explained that, my mother's death. She left me this house and I've stayed here because it's convenient to go to see the medical men and so on.

So there are some good things about this housing?

Yeah [unenthusiastically], the convenience is the main thing. I don't like the limited garden facilities here. I don't like it being a stratum title where you've got the body corporate to answer to and you can't do exactly what you like; and I don't like being so close to neighbours.

These are all things that if you had a choice, you would change?

Yeah, I wouldn't mind living in suburbia if it was on a quarter acre block where you could spread your wings a bit.

So what do you like about living here? You've said convenient to go to the doctor.

Yeah.

And it's near the bus, I suppose.

Well you've got quite a walk to the bus. I haven't investigated the Door Stopper.

So how do you go to the doctor?

Drive myself. I've still got the farm Ute.

Can you tell me any other things that you like about living here?

Well it's comfortable. My place needs a lot more doing to it before it's really comfortable. [Son's name deleted] investigating that at the moment. Mainly because I've made it in my Will that he has life tenancy of that place.

So he's got a stake in fixing it up.

Because of his history, I don't want to leave it to him freehold. It wouldn't be fair to the other kids anyway. Do you want me to give you a bit of his history?

It's not necessary, because ...

Well because of his drinking, I just can't feel that I can trust him to leave it to him. He's manic-depressive.

So he could sell it. Manic depressive people do that kind of thing.

Yeah.

So what don't you like about living here?

I think I've told you.

The stratum title?

The closeness of neighbours, the traffic, especially the hooners on motor bikes, hotted up cars.

So in what ways could you improve your housing situation?

If I can't go back to [name of town in Victoria deleted], and if it turns out that I can't go over to Victoria [to live with my daughter] I'd look at selling this and getting something more isolated than here but on flat ground that I could manage.

What sort of place would you be looking for if you went to Victoria?

Well last time I was over there we had a look at [inaudible], but my daughter's a freelance operator so it doesn't matter where she owns a house. I mean it's just as quick to get to Latrobe University from Ballan as it is from the other side of Melbourne. Fifty minutes either way and a lot of her work is at Latrobe and some of it is well out of the city as far as Geelong, Albury-Wodonga, Shepparton where ever she's called on to work. So she would probably keep an arrangement with someone so she could stay overnight in Melbourne if she had to and go home, where ever home was, when she had days off or whatever.

So is Ballan ...

It's on the way to Ballarat.

So it's a country town?

Yeah.

And what sort of real estate is available there?

Well, the year before we found several houses and we had money for the deposit at that time. They were \$100,000 but last year when I went over they'd gone up to \$150,000. She's looked at other places out in the country and there's been something wrong with every place she's had a look at. Either there wasn't sufficient water, or I felt it was bit far from public transport if I couldn't drive a car, or the real estate was just too expensive.

Really good real estate often means something central on a flat block.

Yeah.

And there's demand for it so you've got to pay for it.

Yeah.

And so what is your thinking about the immediate future? What changes might you make to your housing?

I feel I can't make any plans until the surgery is out of the way; and also, my son was talking about going back to TAFE next year and finishing his ceramics diploma. He was thinking of going back this year but they can't put on two years at once and this year will be first year and next year will be second year. He's already done first year and he's worked in the industry for twenty years, so he doesn't want to go back. It would be too boring to go back and do first year again. The place down at [name of town in Victoria deleted] would be ideal for him to set up his own pottery.

He's already got an electric kiln, which he bought of TAFE. It was in excess. It needs some work doing to it so ... We've got three-phase power on, but he's got to get it connected to the kiln. He's got a gas kiln which he built himself which is up in Brisbane and it's going to cost him money to get it down, or he could start from scratch and build another one. And other sorts of firing he's experimented with. A lot of work with pit firing and a sort of earth kiln built into a hillside. He's got lots of ideas about ... He's very knowledgeable about ... but with his mental state, I don't know, you know; how far he can get with it. He's got to persevere.

And you think ...

Yeah, but when you think of his history you wonder whether that's enough. He cared for his last partner for the last four years of her life. She died tragically at 42.

Cancer?

Yes, cancer that was diagnosed 10 or 12 years before and not dealt with adequately I don't think. Even though she had the best medical attention and [son's name deleted] took her around to all the alternative groups that were around, even down to Ian Gawler, but none of it helped in the long run. And because of that, he found it hard to make other relationships work. He's got five kids spread all over the country.

Five kids are a lot.

Two are in [name of city deleted]. He has contact with them. Two of them are in [name of town in NSW deleted]. He's not allowed to have contact with them. His ex wife's got a DV, domestic violence order against him. And the one in [name of state deleted] is of course a very young affair. He hasn't had anything to do with her or her mother for years. You can't run their life for them.

And what would it be like growing older in your current housing?

Status quo I suppose. Get a bit of help from [son's name deleted]. He's been helping with the housework and any time I've had to go into hospital he's come up and stayed here while I'm in there. But he doesn't get a licence back for 12 months, so he's pedalling across to the hospital on the bike.

'Cos you were saying here it's a bit far from the bus and you drive right now, so that could become a problem but there are other options for transport.

Ah yes. There's community transport. I haven't investigated it because the neighbour up the road is very good. Last time I had to go into hospital for day surgery they said, arrange for somebody to collect you and I said how come, and they said you might be full of drugs and not be able to drive but I turned the drugs down. I didn't have any sedation, just the local anaesthetic and it was injections into the nerve. It was cortisone. The anaesthetic was just to allow the other injection to take place. I can still feel it touching the bone. It's just another feeling, a sensation like heat or cold. I can put up with it.

And what for you is the hardest thing about being a single older woman?

I don't really feel there's anything hard about it.

Well what's the best thing then?

Being independent; independence has always been my aim. That's why I never went into teaching or nursing. You had to work for a boss.

So as a podiatrist you could be your own boss?

That's right, from graduation. I mean I often had to work for people. For a hospital and in the first case for a pharmacist but I still had control of my own life, my own profession; my own professional decisions about treatment were my own.

What effect has marriage and children had?

Well my marriage was going to be a partnership, which it was for quite few years, but my husband had an accident and we were just controlled by that.

So he was dependent on you?

Well, we stayed on the farm for about nine years after he had this accident. He had brain damage. The physical damage, he recovered from that pretty much in a few months but the brain damage changed his personality and that was the hardest time of my life. I said to [son's name deleted] one day I could have quite easily taken off and left you all. And he said might have been better if you had and I said how come and he said somebody would have picked up the pieces. That's his philosophy.

He didn't seem to realise that a mother tends to have more of a sense of responsibility. Judging by his own children, his feelings towards his own children as a father, he doesn't feel the same sense of responsibility as a mother feels. You would understand that. It's to do with the maternal instinct I suppose. You have them, and you know that they are dependent on you and it's hard to... You can't divorce yourself from them when you get older.

You talk about how much you value your own independence and yet when you have children depending on you it does affect a lot of your choices and it affects your independence.

Yes.

So what's that meant in your life?

Well at the moment [son's name deleted]'s dependent on me. He wouldn't like to think he is, but he's living in my house and I have to provide transport if he wants to come up to town. He's not even paying any rent or anything. It's a financial dependence as well, but I think he will recover his independence when he gets that place worked out and gets it set up as a proper ... He will gain his independence and then I won't feel responsible.

So the housing gives him independence. So how has housing, owning a house contributed to your independence?

When we were on the farm we didn't own the house. It was a share farm operation but when we left that we bought our own house and I've always owned a house since. Imagine what it's like to pay rent.

So home ownership's important to you?

A lot of people have said it's better to be paying rent to Housing and they do everything for you. I could see the attraction in that but it would go contrary to the way I feel.

So Housing, there are some real advantages there with maintenance but you have much less choice about which house you have and the size of the house and that's a particular issue for older people, but what about retirement villages where you pay a contribution and the house is yours for life.

Couldn't stand it! From what I've seen of retirement units I don't think I could live in that community. What I dreamed of at one time was a community of women artists.

So you're talking about something preferably in a rural location where you were living with people who shared interests with you and who you got along with?

Yes. I know I've got three or four women friends I could live with so long as we had our own private parts of the house and where we could get together and follow our common interests. With a thing like weaving you do need someone else there at times to help you wind or even to give you advice about things

So you talk about a community of women. You don't feel there's any need to have men...?

Not at my age. Been there, done that. I haven't come across any males I feel I could give up what I've got.

You wouldn't want to live with a man again?

No. Not really. [Son's name deleted] said to me one time, because I was only in my forties when I was widowed. I can imagine how pleased you would have been if I'd done that, because I remember about a month after my husband died I went out socially with a man whose wife spent a lot of time in psychiatric hospitals and he used to take me as a partner to exhibition openings and things like that. I got called Mrs [name removed] several times. When I got home there was [son's name deleted] sitting in his father's chair with the wall clock up behind him and opening the door woke him up. And he said, what time is it? I said time you were in bed and he said, where've you been, what've you been doing? And I said none of your business. He was just being a bit over protective I think.

When you are older and you start a new relationship your children feel they are going to lose you.

Perhaps; and my younger daughter was at boarding school, no she went to boarding school a year or so later, so she was only in year one or two of high school, so I don't think she would have appreciated a man coming in. She'd never known her father as a well man. He'd had his accident when she was only four months old so he'd always been a semi invalid. And I don't think she would have taken it, someone taking his place. Only half of it was being their mother. The other half was looking after the invalid.

So much of your life has been taken up with looking after other people.

Yes, yes.

A very big responsibility ...

It is but ...

So you've given a lot in your life. You've given a lot to other people.

I mean certainly, when you look back I suppose everybody thinks if they'd take a different path; how different life would have been. Let's not really go into that, there's too many ramifications there.

[Conversation about personal issues deleted.]

I've never been dependent on men.

Yet weaving, knitting is a domestic occupation and caring is a female role.

The caring has been thrust on me. I didn't come up here ... it was obvious Mum was too frail to look after herself. I took up podiatry because it didn't discriminate between male and female. I really identified with my profession when my husband died, when we left the farm. I actually made my own job at the hospital. I wrote to the board at the base hospital and put it to them that they needed a public clinic which they didn't have at the time; and they wrote back and said they would think about it and they wrote and said they had come to a conclusion that what I said was right and the position had to be advertised but I was welcome to apply.

And you applied and got it?

Yeah. Mainly because no other in the area knew it was advertised. That happens occasionally.

What does home mean to you?

Well I can relax. I can play my own music. I can go to sleep when I want to in the middle of the afternoon if I want to; stay up all night if I want to. I don't have to worry about children or anybody

else in the house. I can eat what I want when I want. The garden is important as far as home goes. I really need somewhere where I can grow a few vegies that I want, organically of course.

Can you tell me more?

I've always been an enthusiast for organic growing. I've felt it's the answer to a lot of the world's agricultural problems and if you don't start at home where are you going to start? I mean when you're stuck in a unit and you haven't got much garden. I think community gardens would be a great idea. I don't know of one here.

So there's not just one way of ... You don't necessarily have a house on a block of land all to yourself. There are other ways to ...

Yes. Yes. Communities are a good idea. Co-operatives where people ... One place I saw on Landline today. They call them plottists; nothing derogatory about it. Not plotters; people who cultivate plots.

Some of those traditional villages used to have that.

Yes. My grandfather in England he worked on the railways and the houses didn't have very much garden but all the tenants had allotments where they grew all their own vegetables. It was important in those days, like in the early days of Hobart

When were they built?

The house I lived in as a child was in Bellevue Parade. The block had been an orchard and all the houses faced east, faced the railway line so the North side of the house did not have much garden or windows but there was quite a long back yard and still we fruit trees. I suppose you got plenty of sun in the yard but the house certainly was not built to maximise the sun.

And when were those houses built.

At the turn of the century I think.

But with the long back yard

I wasn't interested in gardening in those days, in the years between kindergarten and going to high school.

Did your father garden?

No. My father was married to his business, which was in the city, but he died in 1944 just before I was 14 and he had left home some years before that, I can't say exactly when. My mother and her family did

the garden. My grandfather was only semi-employed at the time, so he used to come and help in the garden.

So you did have a veggie garden?

Oh yeah. Some of my kids seem to be interested in organic gardening. The organic part of it started when I read Bill Mollison's books, permaculture. He developed feet of clay as far as I was concerned. I did a workshop with him here, nothing to do with gardening. It was on ethical money management. I was a bit disillusioned really. His ideas in the permaculture books are sound but he has taken credit for stuff that isn't his originally.

For permaculture?

He acknowledges that a lot of it is traditional but he hasn't given credit to his co-author in the permaculture book. Holmgren and author of the [inaudible] revolution in Japan. The book was translated by a westerner. He developed agriculture suited to the Japanese climate.

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 6

[Interviewee 6 had gone back to university as a mature age student after having raised a family and divorced her husband.]

Can you tell me about where you used to live before you moved here?

Before I lived here I lived in a share house in Sandy Bay, which is down near the university and I shared with a young man which was unusual, because me being an older person. And I was there for quite a number of years and had different people shared in the house with me, usually women but on two occasions young males. But yeah, it was good but there was some difficulties in share houses and things, especially when people move out, you've got to find somebody else again and things like that.

Were there difficulties, like sharing a house with an unrelated person?

No.

No problems getting on with people or people pulling their weight with the housework?

No.

So you didn't mind living like that?

No. It was fine. I mean it was very close to the uni, which was one of the main things, but when I actually went to answer the advertisement there was absolutely not a stick of furniture in the place. And the young man who interviewed me, we were both sitting on the floor [laughs].

Which was unusual for you I suppose?

And he said have you got any furniture? [Laughs loudly.] And I said oh yes, I've got a washing machine and a fridge and this and that and in the course of the interview I said like, I had three sons and he said you'll be all right. We'll get along. [Laughs] And he was a junior weight lifter. He was actually the Tasmanian champion at the time, junior champion.

He must've been a very interesting person to share with.

Yes, it was fun. In some ways there were some very funny incidents occurred, especially even in the early stages which ... he thought I was pretty cool [laughs] as a result of a couple of things that occurred, including being raided by the police on Mother's Day morning [laughs]. He'd had a party the night before and I'd deliberately gone out, you know that's how ... And yeah, I got up in the morning and there was a bit of a mess and I thought, oh well I'm not going to be sitting here all day.

He won't be up until afternoon, and I sort of tidied up. And when I was actually going out they were stewing up magic mushrooms [laughs]. And I'd just tidied up and the cops came in and I sort of thought, ooh, and sort of, I gently put the cups and the pot and everything in the dishwasher and turned it on [laughs out loud].

Ooh and what happened with the mushrooms?

Oh well they'd been out and rampaged over the night, which is why, they ...

Oh so they'd already used the mushrooms and just the leavings were there.

Yeah, and the cups and that and I thought I'll just coolly stack them in the dishwasher and turn the dishwasher on.

I suppose they thought with a respectable older woman there, there wasn't too much going on.

No. They were very tentative, very tentative. And yeah and he was saying to them there's nothing here, there's nothing here and all that and of course I'd find some of their left over grass. I was in my dressing gown still.

I didn't know police did that.

Oh they turned his bedroom upside down. And you know then they looked at me, because I was sharing, honestly they thought it was a bit funny I guess. And this person was keeping on saying, no there's nothing, there's nothing you're wasting your time and when they went out he said to me, there's nothing and I said, oh what about this [pretends to hold up the bag of grass] and he said oh cool [laughs]. Yes so ...

So why is it that you were living in a share house?

I'd separated from my marital home and I rented. I was in another place before that.

A rented place?

Well it was funny it was a friend's place. She had a shop and the top ... because I was a bit sort of desperate and she said I don't know if it's any good to you but if you want to you can ... you know ... upstairs ... it was pretty derelict but in a matter of a three or four weeks you know, I just painted it, floor ceiling walls and everybody who came around I gave them a bucket of spackfilla [laughs] and they sort of [laughs] filled the holes in and yeah it made it really liveable within a few weeks but then she had ... the bank said, she couldn't go any further with her business and she had to get out and then I had to look for, well look for share, because it was you know, too expensive otherwise.

Mmm.

And it was lucky because this young guy, it was just near Easter, and oh god how am I gonna because where I was it was up in [name of suburb deleted]. And it was Easter and how am I ever going to get my gear out of there and he could drive and he [said] I'll help. And he just came and he picked things up and put them over here. And it was a bit funny that should happen and so when I told people, when I was in my new flat, I said I've got my own bouncer.

So how long were you there for?

Well I'll work it out, four years I think. I reckon four years because I don't think I was quite finished the degree. It took me five years to do that. And then ... yeah that would be about right. That was right.

That was good that you were able to stay at the same place the whole time. Was that because it was university housing?

No. It was just a guy who owned it just had it rented out. And he said you, you know you're right there [name deleted] and eventually he had a niece who was getting married [who was going to move in] and he actually let us know that we'd have to move out, but he gave us six months notice so that was pretty good.

And so did you move to here after that?

Yeah, because I was actually in a de facto relationship at the end, at the beginning of it and we looked for rental stuff and that was really difficult, trying to find rental accommodation and then started to look at the option of purchasing.

With the two of you I guess it was pretty easy to meet the repayments on a loan.

Well I had by that stage money out of the property settlement or half of it. Half of it was still tied up; otherwise I would have paid for the house completely. And he was eligible for a war service loan so not half, I put two thirds in and he put in his war service loan. And he was paying the payments but that sort of, but when eventually I made him move on and he wasn't concerned about you know, so long as I paid the payments, about the loan but because of the legal nature of it. I mean if I died he got the house and if he died I got the loan [laughs] you know, but I still had to pay it off.

You had the loan anyway.

So eventually, then it was difficult to get, to refinance the house at the time

Oh so you have refinanced?

I've refinanced.

So that he doesn't get the house if anything happens to you?

Right, yeah because of the legal situation I eventually decided and eventually I was able to after a number of tries to refinance and put it all in my name.

So it was in joint names before?

Tenants in common; I'm not sure there was some legal thing and particularly because it was a war service loan, I mean he didn't worry about it but if I refinanced it, it meant he still had access to the remainder of the loan. It was \$25,000 and by the time we did that he still had \$20,000 to draw on so, but it was unsatisfactory for me

So he could draw on the loan?

Yeah, because it was paid off with only a certain amount of it being used. He had access to that loan if he needed, wanted to.

So he did he use it?

Not to my knowledge but I thought even if he wanted to buy a caravan or something you know \$20,000 could do something.

You were vulnerable, if you didn't change that situation.

Oh if I didn't yes, it was most unsatisfactory really; most unsatisfactory but I had to persist with it for quite some time before I was in a position to refinance it.

Because of the affordability of the repayments?

Well it was probably to do with the interest rates. As interest rates came down it then put it in a position that I was able to do it.

So your repayments, are they manageable?

Mmm, because I've actually topped up on the mortgage to get other things done and it's still manageable. It's still a better deal than trying to be renting anywhere.

Mmm

Yeah so even if I was just on the pension I can still pay them off. Only thing I could still get into trouble is if interest rates started soaring again but I always say, see I've got the option to sell the place

so, especially having quite a bit of equity in it. That's always an option and that's one of the reasons I've been you know, trying to get it up to scratch to give myself a few options.

Mmm, so what do you like about living here?

Well it's close to everything; close to the CBD; close to the shops; close to public transport. At the moment it's a fairly quiet neighbourhood. I like the cul de sac so there's no traffic going through.

So sounds like it was a good choice.

It was a good choice and the thing is I might have made sillier choices if I hadn't been with the person at the time. Because you know you think, oh I'd like to have a look down, you know in the bush [laughs] or somewhere like that but because he was a musician it wasn't a good idea, like driving home late.

So he needed to be near town?

Yeah, we were looking for somewhere close to town and I, having done the sociology, was aware of the gentrification you know, so the closer to town we could get you know the better probably the return would be. Basically we finished up with two. There was one out at Claremont and one here that I was looking at and on the whole the feel, the view and the block and everything...

It's a nice little place to live.

Yes. It's very, very handy

And what don't you like about living here. Is there anything you don't like?

Here? You mean the geographical location?

Well everything, here in this house, in this location. Is there anything about it that you don't like?

[Pause] I don't know really. I don't think there's anything I don't like.

Mmm, so is there anything about living here that is better than you expected? You must have had some expectations when you moved in. I mean is it better than you expected?

Than expected? No I think everything, everything is more or less what I expected, particularly in relation to the property values and things like that are. That's certainly is happening that bottom end of the market is becoming you know, which it is only of value if I want to sell and move somewhere else.

So it has appreciated in value?

Yeah, I would say so. Yeah.

[Conversation deleted.] And you find you can manage the house all right. You don't have any problems managing it on your own?

At this stage? Well this depends on income right [laughing].

Yeah.

Okay [laughing] there are some things that would begin to be a problem if I'm on a low income, continue on a low income. And that's some of the maintenance of the house only, which is why I was trying to sort of make the changes now and get that sorted before I finish up in retirement. But oh, there was, I had a lot of shrubbery out the side and I could see that was going to be a big problem; and so we got stuck into all that and got rid of all that because I decided I would have to have a garden out there that I could manage, and same in the front basically.

So who was this when you say "we"; was that your partner?

No. I did most of it and then, [name deleted], my son and I finished it off because he lived here for some time. [De facto's name deleted] had gone and he was living here. He wasn't here all the time but he'd be here a few days and then back and that was pretty good. But I don't mind being here on my own. I quite like it. In some ways yes probably more enjoyable than I thought because of you know, not being a big gardener in the past but I like the garden and I like the fact that I can go out and hear all the birds and all that sort of stuff; and it makes me feel good, so I do things like considering whether I'd sell and oh, I'd hate to finish up in a little concrete unit and you know, nowhere to go and all those sort of things. When you consider your options, you know, what if and what would I do then, and oh no, so every time I think about that I come back to no, it's this one, it's a good spot right now and I can just improve the place a bit and reduce the maintenance problems.

So it's working well for you?

Yeah. I think so. I'm really pleased that I've got flat entrance the car comes in 'cos I was looking at those things. I guess a lot of people don't. If you've been in a house from when you're young you can get trapped. But I mean I'm looking at houses, nah wouldn't do, there's too many stairs to get up in there, and all that sort of thing. So there just having been able to walk straight across from the car just like so, I was thinking about things like that; and those are the sort of things I'm thinking about even with the renovations which is why I want to put the bathroom in the bigger room. You only have to have a fall or something and you need the nurses to come in and bathe you. When you're older to be able to have the place, that's okay.

So this is three bedroom now?

This is three but I'm basically turning it into, or hoping to, into a two bedroom with a bigger bathroom.

And a separate toilet?

I've got a separate toilet and I'm turning the bathroom into a laundry. And I'm taking the wall out between the kitchen and the laundry and making all that into a nice big kitchen.

So you'll get the sun at the back?

Yeah, because the view's out that way, yeah. That's the only thing I don't like. The kitchen, not enough light in the kitchen and the view goes there and yet there's a beautiful view out there. Yeah so that's the main thing. It can be a bit dark inside and probably could do with a skylight.

What about the maintenance issues because this is a weatherboard house although it looks pretty well maintained on the outside?

It's not. No, no, at this end in the main. It's not that there's a big job to do it but there's weatherboards there and the paints peeling off and again if you've got enough money to get someone to do it it's not a problem but with me not working it's a bit of a worry.

And so have you painted the outside at all yourself and would you do that yourself?

At the moment I'd be fit enough to be able to paint most of it but I wouldn't be able to paint around, like here, unless I had a scaffold up but I would be fit enough, but I've got the three boys, but I mean they're not here; but I guess if it got too bad I'd you know, won't give in and ...

So none of them are here?

(Youngest son's name deleted)'s in Tasmania.

I thought one of the others had come back.

Oh [eldest son's name deleted] was back for a number of years and then he's been in Perth doing a second residency but then the boys would rather just pay somebody to do it than spend their good time on doing it, if you know what I mean [laughing].

So are they likely to do that, to help you with getting it painted?

Yeah, if it got to that stage; and I've said to them if it gets to the point where you think I can't really manage it, say so. But while I'm fit I'm trying to get it done now, than be a problem later on.

So you're saying you would listen to them if they thought that it was now too much for you to be living here and you needed to move somewhere else, you would listen to them because you'd be relying on them for support to stay here?

Yeah, I'd be prepared to listen to them. I've always said to them, even though two of them aren't married yet I mean, I'd be prepared to go into a neat little granny flat and be of help to them with their own families, if I was older, so long as I was fit enough to do it. So you just don't know do you and that's the problem, if you knew what was going to happen ahead of time but at least you need to try and think through what possibly could be some scenarios that you'd need to deal with I think.

Well you've been thinking about it and so you've been making some improvements to the house and trying to make sure the maintenance is pretty well all right?

Yes, for three reasons, one to try and get it done while I can afford it, while I'm earning income which I'm not at the moment [laughing]; two that it's easy to maintain; and three it gives me some options; if I go somewhere else I can rent it or it'll give me a better option if I want to put it on the market, so yes it gives me all those options, whereas, so that's the main thing.

But you're not planning to move now? You see yourself staying here indefinitely?

Well it depends. No I don't. No, I mean, with the work situation if I can't get back into work then I would consider all sorts of other options. I'd consider going to WA if [eldest son's name deleted] and [eldest son's wife's name deleted] and their family stayed over there. If you know, not necessarily living in a granny flat but being somewhere where I could be a bit of a help, whatever, I'm flexible that way.

Mmm, yes one of the questions I was interested in was what is likely to influence any future changes you might make and I think you're already telling me about that.

Yeah, employment, mainly because it's the main way that I'll be having any income coming in. I guess it, meaning unemployment, not having any income coming in.

So do you have any plans about retirement?

Ideally I'd like to work until I was sixty seven and a half.

Is there a reason?

Yes. There is a good reason. If I was fit enough to continue work: one because of my previous health I wasn't in the work force and only came into the workforce in '97 and while I'm well enough and have got a lot to contribute I'd like to work until then because I have to work until I'm sixty two and a half before I'm eligible to retire because of when I was born.

Oh because of the pension you wouldn't get the pension until then?

No. There are some other benefits you can get but 62 and a half is my retirement age which is a bit of a surprise because until recently I thought it was sixty and then I found out quite recently it was 62 and a half.

So how come 67 and a half then?

Well if you actually maintain yourself for five years there's a payment that you can get if you're not actually drawing the pension. And I know what the payment is if you do five years. If you do less than that you still get some payment but it's not as much as if you maintain yourself for five years so as long as I was fit and well enough not to need to draw the pension I'd be happy to do that.

And what would you be using the payment for?

Well I've still got a small mortgage; to try and knock that over basically, because I understand at the moment it's something like \$26,000 if you maintain yourself for five years. And I reckon that would probably...

You said your mortgage was about twenty thousand but you've perhaps dipped into it a bit?

I've topped that up so at the moment even at the payment rates that's required at the moment I'd be 85 before it's paid off.

So what's the size of your mortgage?

Oh thirty-something I think.

That's quite big when you're on a low income.

But with the interest rates at the moment that's quite good.

And you're on unemployment benefits right now. No. What are you on?

Nothing.

Oh, because you recently finished work?

Yeah. I've been applying for jobs and didn't want to go onto the benefit if I could help it but it's got to the stage now where I've got to.

So how long have you been living on nothing?

Since mid-January.

And are you finding it very hard?

Well I had some money but it's ... Yeah I did have some money but it's got to the stage now where I've got to do something.

So if you don't get a job soon you'll go to Centrelink?

I'll go to Centrelink this week. But I've got two job applications I'm waiting for the results on now. One of them, which is the job I was doing but you know, delay, delay, delay with it all, but you just have to hang in there. I always feel like it's my house and I'm always in a position to sell it if things get a bit difficult.

If you need the money?

Yeah, lots of people living in Housing Commission houses and all that stuff, so it wouldn't worry me.

Although it's harder to get in these days, much harder.

Probably, probably, as I say, I like what I've got here. The garden's great because that can save a lot of money because what you can grow. It does save me a lot of money.

So you grow your own vegetables?

Some of them; through winter mainly silver beet, which I love. Fruit I've got mainly, like a lot of fruit there but it carries me through the months but it's easy before when I was working we'd often put spuds in a pot and think what've we got.

You mean you'd put them in a pot plant.

Yeah. [Youngest son's name deleted] was always putting things in and then you'd just turn them up and we'd have a feed of spuds. We've got spuds. We've got silver beet. We've got a meal. I don't mind that you know but not that I barter deliberately but when I have apples and things I give them to people and the next thing's somebody says: do you want some lettuce, do you want some tomatoes? And all that goes on, so there's a whole lot of things that if you don't have a garden that you can't do.

So you've got other friends with gardens or friends and family with gardens?

Yeah, I've even had friends who I've given nectarines who've turned up here with fish all filleted and everything; so there's lots of things like that. Don't tell the tax people! [Laughing.] I dread it. One day they're going to come and ...

Find a way to tax something like that. [Laughing.]

Come into my garden and say provisional tax of this amount of dollars. Well it's good they took the GST off whole foods. That's what worried me and I thought well the day they do that I'll cut everything down. Yeah, but I get a lot of enjoyment out of the garden too, so I think it's good value.

So you win both ways. You get enjoyment out of it and you also can supplement your income.

Absolutely.

So you clearly think ahead about getting older.

Yeah.

Even in deciding to buy this house and influencing the choice you made. So you said you didn't want to live in a concrete box somewhere but do you think about the day might come when you might decide to move into something like a retirement unit. Do you have any thoughts about that? About what it might be like to do something like that? Do you think it might be a good option depending on the situation?

Well I do think about it and I mean everything depends on how fit and well you are, right? And I do a lot of things to maintain my fitness. The way I eat and all those sorts of things.

And exercise?

Well not a lot, but I mean ...

But you do the garden.

Yeah. That's still not a lot but just having the space to go around and walk around there you know. My idea eventually is, because it's layered like that, is my idea is like a golf course, you'd go out and you'd have to go like this you see [indicating circuitous route with hand] and by the time you come back you've had a bit of a walk [laughs].

Yeah.

So yeah.

Do you know anyone in any retirement units?

No, a friend moved into somewhere recently. I haven't been there. I've been invited to come down some time. Well as I say, if the time comes then I would look at what I needed to meet my needs.

Mmm.

I think that's the sensible ... I think it's silly to be pushing when things aren't meeting your needs or fitting your needs.

So often retirement units come along with the option of services or even a nursing home or hostel bed as the next step, but there are other sorts of housing that might meet what your future needs might be. You don't know what they are now but you would look at what was the suitable housing for your needs?

Absolutely, whatever it was at the time and as I say, I think I'm reasonably able to analyse you know the whole things to do with my situation and work out what that is.

So it would probably be ... some of them are obvious aren't they? It would probably be a smaller place that was easy to look after, where you didn't have so much yard to look after?

Yeah, well we're already working on that. I mean we're reducing the actual amount of area that's lawn by mulching and sorta having like garden beds. So they're two options I've got to reduce the actual amount there.

So you are already trying to reduce the amount of work that this place needs?

Yep and then, as I say, at the moment I can easily find someone to do some things at a reasonable price.

So you pay someone to mow the lawn?

No because it's been brown, but somebody I got onto that will do the garden at a reasonable price and I just, well it's as tidy as it is now and he's done a good job. Firstly as he's very cheap I say, take some nectarines [laughs] as well.

You help me I'll help you.

Yeah, so he took a nice bag of nectarines home and things like that so, and I guess you can usually find somebody that can do a bit of work but then again, that's income stuff again you know if it gets too bad that you can't even afford that, well ...

If the interest rates went up, for example?

Well that's the big thing yeah, if interest rates went up too much I would probably have to decide to sell but as I say, it's always an option. I mean there are other options. I mean the boys might decide to buy the house themselves and me pay them rent or whatever. There are other options. It's possible.

Would they be using it to negative gear?

Don't know. But I mean there's only a small amount on the mortgage so they may well say to me well don't worry about it Mum, we'll take on the payments because you know obviously they're going to get the house in the end, sort of thing.

I suppose you're lucky to have successful sons aren't you?

Yeah I think they'd be sensible. They would think about that. Yeah. If I wanted to stay here and let's us pay it off and then you know, you don't have to worry about the payments or whatever but ideally as I say, if I can work a little bit I could get it paid off in a very short time and then I'm in good shape when I'm on the pension.

So when you work you actually increase the payments you make on the house?

Ah yeah. I've got that sort of a mortgage that I can pay whatever I want off it and then ...

There's a certain minimum?

And then anything else that's extra in there, you can redraw it down to what, you know so that's a good option. I've got some super which probably would be wise if I continue working for a few more years it would be wise to put that off the mortgage as well because I've looked at that. I've spoken to people at the bank about that.

So you won't have enough super to draw a pension?

No, there won't be much as far as income but if you've had your house paid off it's the same thing as having income isn't it? Right, plus you've got your pension. If my house was paid off it would mean ... like at the moment I'm paying just over three hundred a month. I've looked in the paper and there's no way you could get rent or anything ...

Not now

No. Even sharing a place you'd probably only be having a room and you'd be paying that much.

And so another option would be to rent out a room.

Yeah well, share the house, because that's another reason why I was doing it up so it would be possible to have a share person. I forgot that option, but that's another option.

So when you say you're doing it to increase your options, yeah

Yeah that's another option that it's neat enough to have somebody share the place. [Emphatically.] Who knows, I might meet somebody wonderful, especially if I've got a decent house.

So you still think that that might be an option of having another relationship with a man in the future?

Yeah. Yeah. But I'm not looking for anyone.

But if it happens ...

But if it happens it happens. Yeah. There's no reason why not. The older you get the more likely there are to be widowers around or whatever. I wouldn't be looking for somebody who hadn't been married again or who had been unsuccessfully married several times [laughs].

[Laughs.] So you'd be looking for a widower?

[In unison]

So you'd be looking for a widower, yes.

So I'd be looking for a widower, yes.

And what does ... I mean you're not that old are you. I mean how old are you?

I'm 60 this year.

So you wouldn't really have noticed much about growing older?

No I haven't. I have a pretty good level of vitality. I don't know whether that's because of my lifestyle or well I guess, it could contribute to it but I've certainly got a high level of vitality and I've seen people who are the same age as me, and I go oh my god, so I think I'm doing pretty well and I'm just hoping that it will continue.

And a lot of that is about how well you look after yourself and so you look after yourself?

Yeah. I think I do. I think I look after myself very well. I have a very healthy diet. I have experienced blood pressure problems and I take medication and I'm very compliant with that because of my mother's situation of course. My mother was of a religion that didn't believe in going to doctors and she had a massive stroke five years ago and has been in a nursing home since then, very disabled. But I think again, that information motivates me to try and comply with medication because that's the main thing, if you control blood pressure then you're less likely to have a stroke.

And do you get advice about what other things you can do? Like you say you are on a good diet so you must be on a low fat diet, because low fat diet and exercise they are the two main things that help with high blood pressure.

Low fat, yeah. Well you're lucky you've got full cream [indicates the mug of tea]. I've been on low fat milk for over three years now. I don't eat a lot of meat. I eat a lot of vegetables and a lot of fruit. I've taken a vitamin/mineral supplement for about fifteen years. And I'm taking salmon omegas for about five years and will continue to.

Salmon omega?

Salmon omega 3's yep, which ...

Is good for all sorts of things, including cholesterol and arthritis ...

And there's some evidence that the mental health problems, it's good for those too but yeah. Don't drink much, don't smoke. Try and keep myself fairly fit.

So you are well on track to be ageing well.

Yeah. My family are long lived. So Mum's 86 or 7 and Dad's 80, because the doctor said, oh what age did your parents die [laughing]?

They're not dead yet!

They're not dead yet. You're right. Yes, so yeah, that could well have; hopefully, I would be disappointed if I don't get at least another twenty years.

Of good health?

Oh good health? You can't predict. I don't think I'd grumble if I ... I mean things can happen. I mean you can be in a car accident or you can have a fall or get bowled over and you could have problems like that but I guess, take it as it comes; but I'm trying to do everything to avoid those things. But people think perhaps I'm a bit morbid, say because I'm having the bathroom set up so that if I needed somebody to come in here and bathe me it's a suitable bathroom, you know. They think oh it's funny that you're thinking about that, but mind you when I say that people don't realise that I'm already nearly 60.

They probably think you're younger

Yeah they do. Yeah so they think it's a bit funny doing those things, but it's about, the advantage is the training, the academic training and that is that you do look ahead, you look and make predictions. What are the scenarios? What possibly could there be and therefore what you're doing is making decisions and that partly take those into account; so I guess that's an advantage having that ability to analyse and think things through and do things like that while some people are more, only thinking for

the moment. So they are probably all advantages. I probably wouldn't eat as much fruit and veg if I didn't grow them either [laughing]. So there's another thing. [Pause.]

[Tape turned off.]

Interviewee 7

How long have you lived here?

Forty-four years [with an air of pride and satisfaction].

That's a long time. Can you tell me about where you used to live before you lived here?

I used to live in Mount Isa in Queensland and in Sydney and of course in Austria. I was born in Austria, in Vienna. When I was 22 years old, I decided to go for a trip but because there was not much money around in these days for the young people. And so these migrant things came up. And so I applied for that and in a very short time I got accepted and I remember still when I was at the immigration office, it was cold, it was February/March, I had the opportunity to go to either Australia or Canada but it was such a cold winter I thought, oh no, I'd better go to Australia. So I had to make a statement that I would stay for two years and I thought all right two years, I will learn a bit of English and then I will come home again.

But you didn't come back.

No. And in one week I had to report to Salzburg and on the boat on the first year I went to Australia, first to Sydney. We were five single girls on the boat. All other ones were already brides to be because there were many young men here and they all went, 50 percent went back because they couldn't get ...

A female partner?

No girls! And the food was, the worst thing for the young was, and especially for the Polish people too, that they didn't get the rye bread. This white bread wasn't for them. This was a big obstacle.

I prefer rye bread. I don't like white bread at all. One of the best things for me about Denmark was the bread. It was just the sort of bread I liked.

You had a lot of rye bread too there.

Yes the black bread.

So they encouraged the young girls to go there but not so many young girls by themselves wanted to go so far as Australia. So, we was so quick.

Was this just after the war?

That was in '55.

And then I ended up with a Jewish family actually from Vienna. I should have come in a children's home because I used to be a kindergarten teacher. But this lady found out I came from Vienna and they were rich people in Vienna and they had housemaids and cooks and everything. And she wasn't a good cook or whatever, and she thought I was a good cook, everybody what comes from Vienna, but I never was cooking much at home either because, you know, my mother cooked.

But you are a good cook aren't you?

I don't know. I don't know.

You cook!

I have to cook! I have to cook! Now for the first time I don't have to cook for anybody, it lasts two months. So I just cook for myself. And of course I met my husband to be on the boat already, and then in Sydney, I got my first baby in Sydney, in Queensland. We went, from one day to the next, we said all right, we're going to Mt Isa. There was a lot of money there and we stayed in a tent [laughing] there was no houses available.

With the baby?

With the baby in a tent, and you know when the cyclone comes and the water comes, over night it was flooded, oh yes, I had to put everything up. My husband couldn't get job in the mine, so he had to go to Darwin. And I stayed in Mt Isa, but there were only houses available for the people who worked in the mine and so I couldn't get one, no private houses, nothing; so I stayed with the baby on the verandah in the YMCA hostel and only in the verandah because everything was full up. It was the wet season. And we had to, people who lived in the farm when they were pregnant, they couldn't get a doctor go to Mt Isa, so one month before the baby was due they had send them to Mt Isa and that hostel, so they could stay until the baby arrived because there was no flying doctor much or something around, you know when the flood is you can't go through, so that I stayed there nearly for two years.

So there was a special hostel for people who had babies?

Had babies or expecting. You know they put me in because I had nowhere to stay.

And how old was your baby?

He was born in November and that was about March. I used to think [inaudible] in the tent first, but it was in the single men's quarter I stayed in the tent, but I done the washing in the single men's quarter and once the shirts and the supervisor came around and chucked me out, said you can't stay here. I wasn't allowed to stay in the tent, so I had to go to Mt Isa and I stayed in that hostel, so I got through that.

Yeah, and then we came to Sydney and again we went down to Sydney again but the housing was so expensive and I was pregnant again and with the baby and with a two year old boy nobody gave you accommodation at this time. And it was already very expensive also. So my other brother he lived here, just down the road and he said, oh in Tasmania there are so many shacks because the Polish people they built those shacks here and then they built a house next to it. And that's the shack here and that's where we lived [indicates the shack outside].

Okay. Show me later.

Yah, and so actually, we were happy. I was on my own the block of land and the shack and later on we started to build without money and I know I had to borrow \$9 for the foundation for the concrete because we needed one yard more. They had exactly the money but I had to borrow nine pound. So that's why we didn't built very big. We had only four children.

So it sounds like you had all your children quite quickly.

I had six in seven years and then I had a break. And then I had [name removed], the youngest, just after.

So you have seven all together?

But I lost one drowning in the sea [voice drops] ... just, we had just finished it in the New Year, and then eight days later we went to the beach, Roaring Beach. It was such a great beach and nobody there.

It's a very dangerous beach isn't it?

But we didn't know this.

So which boy was this?

It was the first boy after the three girls.

So the one who was out here [in the flat out the back]?

No the eldest boy one. He moved over there. He was already 12 years old, and then we had another one ... We thought we'd build on the kitchen and make a big sunroom and everything but then we didn't.

So you had four boys and three girls?

No. Four girls. One boy, three girls and two boys and then lost one boy and then I got another girl.

So how old were the children when you split up?

[Youngest child's name deleted] *was only two and a half.*

So you've been on your own with all your children for a long time.

Mmm, long time, yes.

How old's [youngest child's name deleted] now?

She's 31. You see I went to work, because [husband's name deleted] worked shift and I worked at Hadley's. I went to [name of suburb deleted] and I went from one job to, from one hotel to the other one and asked for the job; and then I got one in [name of hotel deleted], in the house and I'd never done any beds proper but I tried, I said, all right I can do it and I done it quite well. And my girls when they were 13/14, I could get them in too to work on the weekends. And then in the evening I worked down at Sinbad's. You know [name deleted] the restaurant? On my day off I worked there too so the chef could be replaced and I could take the little one with me in the housemaid. First I was casual only so she brought me the toilet paper, she was really good and she slept in the staff room sometimes for a few hours you know. Because the crèche was very expensive and there was only one crèche in [street name deleted] Street and I couldn't deduct it from the tax; and at lunch time, sometimes they called me at lunchtime at Hadley's, there was a chef down at Sinbad's he drank too much. He mixed the orders off so they sent for me in my lunchtime and I went there and I helped him to cook, so.

So you worked for quite a few years then?

Yeah, yeah, then the social security came and she said why are you working and I couldn't deduct it from the tax, my child care, and so that's wrong because all the men who came for lunch to [name of restaurant deleted]'s they could deduct their lunch from their salary and I tried to work here and I couldn't deduct and it was quite expensive in [street name deleted] Street. I could bring her only there at nine o'clock but I started early so I had to get someone there in the morning there to pick up. She came here and she was sitting there and she said you don't have to work so hard, you can still work but you get social security also. And [youngest's name deleted] was only a few years old and she said, Mum, why you have to go to work and then I said no. I was a bit overworked and so I thought, oh no, then I went but I always was working you know I never was full time.

So you then got benefits and you didn't have to work full time after that, because of the children?

Because she said Mum, why you go to work always, when she come home from school and nobody was home. She didn't like that. With the other one I only worked at night-time. With the bigger one, so then the other children were all right. But she hasn't got any handicap; and the other one, they've all done very well. At school they never thought this was a single mother with children ... they all went through matric. But not the oldest boy, he didn't finish it but he went to work because he was apprenticed with my husband and of course he didn't want to go with him, so he finished his apprenticeship; he didn't finish it, but he went to work. I said to him why don't you go back to school. He said ah no. I said why it doesn't matter. We have a house I have to pay it for the house still. But then he went down to the Zinc Works and then he went [inaudible].

But we managed. I learned to drive. I couldn't drive. Of course I said I have to control all those children when they come all in their teenage years. So I still can't drive much but I made my licence and I sat next to the children to have to make their licence. So it was all right. But then I started to go to Europe and we saved up. The important thing is you have to keep together and the children none of them lost a point for the driving lessons or whatever. My biggest boy did when my husband wasn't here but all the other ones we didn't have any troubles really. We helped, except for little arguments that you always have.

But I went to Europe with [youngest's name deleted] and left them all at home. You wouldn't do that anymore; with teenage children you know. There wasn't a window broken. The car, they had my car. The car was in order when I came back. And I gave them the cheque to write out the instructions for everybody and my signature and they could take the money; and (eldest's name deleted) said, "Oh Mummy are you still there? I've saved already some money too." They took over my job. They were good to work. And I was a good worker. I had a good resume so I could always bring the girls with me too. And they earned good money especially when it came to the long weekends. They got good pay.

So they were doing part time work while they were still at school?

Part time, yes; [eldest's name deleted] worked for nearly two years part time ... and she was a very early one. She started school already when she wasn't five so she had a year to play with and she went back to matric. All three girls went to matric and then the boy came. Only [youngest's name deleted] didn't go to matric. She went to but then she got offered a job from [son-in-law's name deleted].

So [name deleted], he was her brother in law at that time?

Yes. And then I said you have to do something more so she went one year to technical college and she was quite good. And they had a work experience and the teacher said, for the university they said look send me some decent girl. The year before they must have sent them some, I don't know what it was ...

So she sent [youngest's name deleted] there and that's where she met her boss; that was during the year and then end of the year in the newspaper was the ad and I said why don't you apply for that and she said, I won't get it, and I said, come on just try; and she said no and she didn't know the boss was there, the boss she already knew from before. And she got there and there were a few law students and she was in the last three or four and there was one finished law, all with a degree and everything, and she got the job because the man saw her and said you take that girl and she's still there now. She works at the uni and she didn't go to uni.

[Conversation about daughter deleted.]

I'm staying still in the same house. Nobody wants to buy it because there are a few handicaps. The toilet is outside and the bathroom and laundry are together and we haven't got a main bedroom, not big enough where you get into bed from both sides. Because we didn't want to take too much money out because we said we'd build on because my husband was a carpenter, so we always could build on but it never came to that. And now the house is big enough for myself, so I don't need a unit really [laughs].

Yeah. So it must have been a very long time that you actually moved into this house. We're talking about in the 1950's are we?

'59, [eldest's name deleted] was four and she was forty-four last week. That's how I know.

So first of all you bought this block of land?

No, we first rented the shack actually. And then this man got bankrupt and his house went for auction. We could have bought the house for the price what we bought the land, but so we bought the land with that little shack on it. And we lived there all eight people in that shack but all those people here around Springfield they lived like that and we had electricity here and water and years ago when the Polish people came here there was no water and no electricity and no roads made, nothing.

So a lot of Polish people were living around here in shacks?

Yes most, yes; that used to be a Polish too, because they came from Brighton. They didn't want to live in the camp anymore.

Oh the camp was at Brighton?

Yeah, and then the government shouldn't have given the land free for Polaks because there were no roads made.

So the government gave them the land?

Not gave, but got it quite cheap and a few people bought a few blocks of land.

So the person you rented from was one of those, he was a Polish person who owned a few blocks.

Yes, and of course then when the street and the sewerage, we should have paid I don't know how many thousand dollars; the people who had a few blocks of land they had to pay it all for the roads and then there was a committee here in [name of suburb deleted] and they reduced the price what we had to pay, but we had to pay after for the roads and the electricity was here; but for the sewerage because we had only had the can for quite a long time. And my children when we went to town they always wanted to go to the toilet in the library. I said what you doing in there. They learned to flush; they didn't know that you see. They didn't go to school. They'd never seen a toilet. My little boy I lost, he said it's so nice I can do both business in the toilet and it looked so nice. When the Russian soldiers came to Austria they washed their face in that. They didn't know that was a toilet. They didn't have that; back to nature and now they have to try again to bring this other toilet in, the recycled one.

Composting toilets; I saw some in Denmark.

They have it here too. In the City Hall we saw quite a few, to look at it.

Yes they had an exhibition, the alternative homes expo.

Yes. Alternative home, so what happen at the moment in my house? It's a bit up the hill. That's one disadvantage for older people because my friends none of them really drives. I'm still the most mobile and I should visit them all but I haven't got that much time really, but that is a handicap for older people mostly, the transport

And living here in this area?

In that area if you live, I mean not many Polish people left here anyway; a lot have died out, in their eighties.

So what do you like about living here?

What I like about living here? Because I have to [laughs]; I have to live here. It's very hard. We've had this house up for sale already because me and my husband they wanted to go all over there, to Canberra. We didn't really split up normally.

Oh. He went to Canberra for work?

At first I thought because the whole family can't move in one go, so many people. So he went first and then of course Darwin came up and he went to Darwin. And then the children said no Mum we don't want to go. They're not used to it and so far.

Yeah. It's very hard to move older children, especially if they don't want to go.

Yes.

They're settled in school.

They're settled in school but that wouldn't be a problem for them now, especially for my son. They want to live in Singapore.

Up to a few years ago we had a good bus service here three buses in an hour but lately there's not much bus service but the people don't use it that's why we don't get it. It's not that far from the conveniences, supermarket in [suburb name deleted] or [suburb name deleted], it's not that far. And that I think was an important thing for older people.

How do you shop?

I've got a car still but at the moment flat battery because I couldn't drive [due to a fall where she injured her arm]. For myself I don't need much and I've got the deep freezer and the garden, so I really don't need that much but for other people it is a problem if you are not mobile. A lot of people, a lot of the children went overseas and I know another family they live in Brisbane and the parent live here and they haven't got anybody, especially new Australians you know.

So there are a lot of older people living in this area and a lot of them are new Australians and some of their children have moved away?

Yes.

A lot of children in Tasmania move away. Two of mine have moved away and I've only got three. And so what don't you like about living here apart from the hills and the bus?

I can adjust easily I think as long as I have one bed. I don't need six beds. You see, some people get a big house when they are old. There is so much to support a house and you don't need it anymore.

I don't know what size this house is but you find this is not a big house and this is easy enough for you to look after?

At the moment yes.

So it's a level block.

It's a level block. The block, maybe it will be too much for me in a few years but I try to make it easier. I cut a lot down and make it, more easy; like I used to have it. That's one handicap if you have a big block; lots of problems. You know how much to tend a garden.

So the boys don't come and mow the lawn for you then?

That's the easiest mowing the lawn. The motor starts and you just walk around. You know it's just cutting the trees down and things like that. The weeds, a lady opposite she was ninety years old and she made her own garden and you could see around there wasn't one weed in that garden and she lived at home up to the end. There are a few. There is another lady up there. Two ladies were up there. One is nearly a hundred. They're still in their own home. If you reasonably be healthy you can stay in your own home, with a little support of course.

Yes.

You see. And that's the aim for the government now, to let the people stay in their own home.

Yes, trying to support them there, if they want to. So tell me about your neighbours here.

You've told me a bit. There are a lot of older ones and I was wondering ...

Next door, he's 80. He's very fit still. He had the lung cancer. But she doesn't go out of the house much anymore. Only to the hairdresser or if she has to go to the doctor but she's very big and she can't, she's got trouble with the legs but otherwise she's healthy and she never goes to the doctor she never have any or whatever. And this lady she died already a few years ago.

At the back here?

No over here; those old people too, they died a few years ago. And last night there was the first loud teenage party we had for, I don't know how many years [excited], so I don't know if they bought the place but that's young people. And this way they are young people and the lady opposite she's already moved out too. And the man, next door there was an old Polish man, and he died and his wife died just recently. And next-door living to the old people there's another old lady all by herself but she won't let anybody in the house. She's never had children and she never has any relative but she won't you know. You can't approach her.

She's closed off to people?

She's closed off yeah, but she's healthy. And down this road, down [name deleted] Road there, are a few older people, older lady by herself. The other one she got two boys so she's not too bad off, but she don't let anybody in the house either. And she's quite happy in her house also; it's not a big house. My sister in law she's got a big house and that's a bit of a problem, but she's a bit eccentric now. She likes to stay as long as she can and that's what everybody tells me. They'd like to stay as long as they can independent in their house and they all like their independency, even this lady who fell down and she was lying one and a half days on the floor. She stays with her son and I thought she was back to her own home today but her son won't let her, I mean he can't let her. She's 87 years old.

So where does she live?

In [name deleted] Avenue; she lives behind the swimming pool in [name deleted] Road.

That's difficult isn't it?

Yes. Her brother is 92 years old and she used to look after the neighbour who was 90 years old. Got sick, she was a friend of hers, and was only 82 years old. She didn't have anybody to go to after the operation so the doctor asked her if she had a friend and she mentioned that lady, the 87 years old. The doctor didn't know she was 87 and she had to look after her and that was a bit of a strain on her and since then she got a bit sick, I mean, you know the doctor didn't know she was that old and she mentioned that lady and you have to have somebody to go out of the hospital, to stay with somebody and that is a problem.

So she stayed with her? She actually moved in and stayed with her?

Yes and that put a bit of stress on her.

That was a wonderful thing for her to do though.

Oh yes, she is so independent. She does everything and you should see her stairs, clean down to the basement. It looks like an American movie you know.

So it sounds like you know a lot of people living around here, not just your immediate neighbours but a lot of people in this whole area.

Yes. It's because I live here so long. I never was in close contact with too much because I never had much time when the children were little. You can't go visiting with seven children. You know.

No one would want you [both laughing].

I must say my children were well behaved. When we were at home they were not always rough but when we went somewhere they always were sitting up so and I didn't want to put that pressure on my children too much so I didn't go out with them that much. I'd rather have fun with them going to the [inaudible] or the beach or whatever. They don't like to sit with the older people. Most of the other people didn't have as many children. Think maybe these two ladies she only has one son and that only one son and they were both growing up. The children don't like to sit with adults too much. They like their own company, their own age. That's loneliness, that's a big thing too. That's more a thing than anything else when the people [voice drops], when they are not mobile and they cannot visit and if the bus service is not that good then older people can't go on the bus that easy, and especially at night now with the scares and all that.

You mean with the bag snatching?

That is the biggest problem.

Although there are those buses that will go down, kneeling buses.

Yes we got these now but still there's only one in an hour to come up here and then you have to change the bus and if you are a bit slow, you miss the bus and sit another hour somewhere, so it's not ...

You mean to go into town you have to go down to [suburb name deleted] and wait?

I did not put the Polish lady down [on a list of prospective interviewees]. She's on her own now because her husband died on the evening of New Year's Eve and she's by herself now. And she wants me to visit her too. She's not driving you know so they all want me to visit them. I am still mobile and then I just had this [holds up bruised arm in a sling], my fall, so I was handicapped also.

So you can't drive at the moment.

I can't drive, no. I would have to go everywhere somewhere else you see. This one lady she wants me to stay there three days with her and she's got such a big house too.

So you'd be helping her with the house?

No, she can do that still but she's just lonely. That's the problem. And she, with the language she's not too bad. Actually her daughter works in the migrant centre. What's her name? [Worker's name deleted.] A little bit but she had breast cancer also. You see when you are working you can't take time off to look after your mother. That's everywhere.

[Conversation deleted.]

We can talk about that later. In what ways might your housing situation here be improved? If you could make some changes, that would make it a better place for you to live? Are you planning to make any changes?

My children want me to make an indoor toilet, maybe. But ...

It would probably be a good thing. Is the cost a problem?

No the bathroom needs a bit ... it's maybe for one in the bathroom because I got a laundry in the bathroom also. It was good for the children I could bath them in the laundry tub two at a time and the other one in the big tub. I didn't mind really. But in winter when it's cold when I have to go outside. But you can also manage with this pot, the toilet.

Yes.

Even the old lady who fell down from the bed she uses it.

Has she got an outside toilet as well?

No she got it but she has quite a big house. Right at the end of the house and when she walks down in the night ... in the old days they used to do this and there's nothing wrong with that.

My mother used to do that when we were young.

Is your mother still alive?

Yes; when we had the old toilet right down the end of the yard, with the can.

You had a can too, in Sydney?

No it was in country NSW.

You had to bury it yourself?

No.

The collector?

There was a night cart man came, who emptied it once a week.

That's what they did. We didn't have many visitors here on a Monday [both laughing] because Monday was the pickup day. That was a bit of a handicap when you had a big family you know.

Because it would get full?

Yeah. But the people had beautiful gardens [laughing]. Yes, now otherwise ...

Just an inside toilet.

Maybe that because I don't go in the bath tub anymore so I go in the shower and I can go easy in so that's no problem. The land will get too big that's one, but you maybe have to get somebody in to help you one day but at the moment I still can do it.

You've got some paving in there haven't you?

Yeah, my son put the paving here.

It looks good. So you are planning to stay here indefinitely? You've not got any plan to move? Do you think about a retirement unit? Do you think what it would be like?

Not at the moment, no, no.

Do you ever give it any thought that if this got too much for you, you might have to move into something smaller and if so do you think what you would like?

It depends how much I get for that house you see, because if you go in a retiring village where you have to pay your unit, that's quite expensive but otherwise the best would be if you get a carer. That's what a lot of people do; this old lady do, get a carer in the house.

What get someone to live with you? And what would be the arrangement though?

They can have free accommodation and they get the carer's pension. I know two friends of mine; son, he's one man. He worked for the government, he got redundant and his mother's over 90 now and he's got this carer's pension and he looks after his mother and doing all right. But his sister, see because he's the son, she comes and helps them bath her but the cleaning up and the cooking he all does that. And this lady would like that and this other lady who fell down she gave me, whatever job they do, she wanted me to move in. And I said you might have to come to my place and move in with me when I am handicapped too. That is I think, that is the best but who wants to do it? Your own children if they're married and with children, you have to talk with the son-in-law; you have to have to be in good things with the son-in-law and the daughter-in-law and there is tension, there is always tension. And if it's too much tension it's no good. Who maybe? So far as I talk to, none of them want to move in with the children in their house so it's up to the government but even in Tasmania it's too hard to look after the parents so it all falls back to the government. We use the big schools and not many children around you make schools for old people's home. But it's so depressing in old people's homes. At [name of nursing home deleted], one of the ladies went to the [name of nursing home deleted]. She goes there once a week and she sees the people there and it's so depressing.

Yes. People only get their basic needs met and there's no one there to interact with them unless they have family coming in from the outside.

My daughter actually, one of them, my eldest, she had this job; she went to the old people's home maybe once a week singing with them and exercising them and their relatives said their mother improved that much she got a little bit of interest.

Some of them are good.

But if you have Alzheimer's or something like that, what you can do?

Well you can still do things but you need someone who understands what their needs are and how to work with the person.

But all these people 30/40, young people don't want to know much about older people.

No they don't. People are afraid. There is a lot of stigma about getting older.

There is a lot. It never was like this once. They used to look up to the old one and take their advice and things.

As they should, because they are the ones with experience. They won't recognise the people with the most experience.

Even if you are slow with things people say, oh you're like a child again. You are not that fast anymore, and I walk around in reasonable time, you know.

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 8

How long have you lived here?

Here? You mean in the house? For 50 years.

Fifty years. So you came here in 1953 or 52?

No, we actually come here 1950.

1950?

I'm thinking of my daughter. She will be fifty. She was born here. She was born in 52.

So you've been in this house more than 50 years.

Yes.

So you actually moved into this house in 1950?

No. There was no house. It was an empty block of land and my husband bought it and we built the house. We had a little cottage on the back where we lived and from then on we build the house with help of our friends and neighbours, and all that part of it which doesn't exist anymore.

That sort of thing doesn't happen?

No, not anymore.

Oh. It's a lovely house. It's a well-built house.

Yes.

So you built it just the way you wanted it?

Well my husband made a plan and when he went to the City Council; they looked at it and they said you don't need anything else; your plan, because every foot, it was fit there in inches, every foot in inches was completely done correctly.

And he drew it all up himself?

And he did it all himself. The plan was done by him.

And how long did it take you to build it?

Well it was difficult to get timber then. Crisp and Gunn was the only one that supplied us with the timber, bit by bit. I think it took us six months, or more. I can't remember. It could be a year.

That's pretty quick, for building your own.

Well we had a builder. But he built the structure of it. The floor, the ceiling and of course we got solid plaster, that was done by the plasterers too. And electrician has to be done completely, and the plumbing ...

So it must have cost quite a lot?

It was, and by the time we finish building that house we didn't have enough money to pay the electrician. He was our neighbour and he said to me, well pay me whatever you can, not anymore. He said to me, it doesn't matter. Don't worry about it he said. You pay me a pound or two each week and then you pay it off.

And so you did that?

Well, we had no option see. We run out of money.

And so your husband, he was working? He had a job while the house was being built?

Yeah. He worked for Myers. He didn't know how to build [laughing]. He didn't know how to hold the hammer or the chisel but he learned.

So you did the floors?

Oh, the friend of ours, they were a carpenter, that one did that. He put the floors and the doors and all that trimmings around here and then I had about, one morning I got up and I looked and the taxi stopped here and five men come out. They were all Yugoslav because my husband was Yugoslav, and they come to dig our foundations.

Just friends of his come to help?

Mmm ... And we had the electric mixer. Everything was there.

For the concrete to pour the foundations?

Yes, they come up and helped to pour the concrete in, which you know, it was; they're all gone [sniffing], nothing now, nobody's left anymore.

So what brought those people here; the men who helped with the house? Did they come here to work on the Hydro, the Yugoslav friends of your husband?

Some of them worked at the Hydro, long way out, but then they all moved here to town and they were all single then, so they come to help us.

And they just helped. You didn't pay them?

No! They come here and I send to my husband what am I going to give them to eat, you know the first thing I was thinking, and by the time I turn around, I fill it up, I given them all a cup of coffee and the biscuits, they had all disappeared. They didn't want to impose. So, it was friendship.

Yeah. The world has changed hasn't it then?

Yeah, it has. Nobody does anything for nothing anymore.

And yet times were a lot harder then.

They were. They were.

A lot of people had a lot less.

And especially I was pregnant then, and oh, I painted all the weatherboards with undercoat and I was painting [laughing] when my husband come home and said what you do and I say, I painted nearly all the weatherboards each day a little bit more, so it saved the money too.

Mmm ...

So that's how the house ...

Well you built it very quickly then.

With the help.

So you actually bought the land, you built the shack first?

Yes, yes.

You had to build that yourselves?

Yes, yes. No, no the shack built, the next door neighbour.

The carpenter?

Yeah. He build the house for nothing again. We didn't pay him. Oh he didn't ask for pay, he did it but we had to buy the timber and all that part, and that got burned down in the '67 fires.

So how big was the shack?

It had one room. It was our bedroom and a sitting room and everything and it was very nice.

And the kitchen?

And, the little kitchen on the side of it; and then the porch, and on the back we had the laundry and the toilet and all that part of it because there was no sewerage when we moved here.

So you had a can for the toilet or a hole in the ground?

No, no. We had a can. Yes, yes, yes.

So someone would come and collect the can once a week?

No. You're joking!

So you had to empty the can yourselves?

Yes and the milk man come here with the horse and buggy and we put our money and the billy can outside.

So the milk didn't even come in bottles?

No. No. There were no bottles then. No. Oh, it was all friendly and you leave the money there and nobody, I mean I don't know it was somehow the trust before, everyone trust everybody. And the neighbours were already here, on that side, and they've been very helpful and they took us under their wing and we become friends.

Oh so this was the carpenter? And he died recently? Or he died a long time ago as well?

Oh no. He died after my husband passed away, about 15 years ago because I lost my husband 20 years ago, this year it will be.

So you and his wife were still friends and she died recently?

Yes, yes; especially we become very close when he passed away. And sometimes I go out in the garden and she said you were up in the garden at seven o'clock and I said come on girlie, we're having breakfast together. It was friendship. It was nice. And the next from that side neighbour, when I lost my husband, he did a lot for me.

Was this the electrician?

No, no, no. No the electrician lives a bit further down.

And so a lot of the people here, did they build their own houses? No, only you?

Well that house was built 80y years ago, that house there. They were poor people and they built like a little shack and they add outwards. You can see that one by the roof.

The one right next door?

Yeah, next door. It was add-up, bit by bit to it. But of course it's a very nice house inside. So I had very good neighbours.

And ...

And when my daughter was small, went to school here first at [suburb name deleted] and all of us had little babies, little children and we took turns to take them to the bus and collect them. So one day was my turn, the lady that live next door here, the builder who built our foundation for us, he had four children. So it was like one big family, but there, it's all gone; and the same across the street; the people who lived there, [name deleted], the same. We were all friends. We were neighbours and friends. Well that's it. That's how we started and I'm still here, but it's getting more difficult for me. I'm getting older and the block of land is a so very large one. It needs constant attention and I don't like gardening. I never like to dig up but I have to do it just to keep it tidy. I have no option.

And so there are still some people that were here when you first moved in, but not many anymore or?

I haven't got anyone anymore.

No-one anymore. So even the electrician's gone?

No, no, they moved. They live in [name of suburb deleted] now, and when I met his wife not very long ago she say, he's very sick.

So you might be the longest lived person in this street?

In this street, yes, yes.

So you might know more of the history of this street than anyone else?

Yes, yes, I saw the houses going up and build there and I saw the houses being burned in the fires.

So some of the houses that were built when you first moved in were lost?

There were not many here.

There were not many here in 1967 [when the bush fire came through]?

No, we didn't even have a made road. It was just like a big rough road going up.

Or the footpaths?

No. They made them later on, and we didn't have sewerage either. Then they put the sewerage on and the telephone, so we progressed [laughing].

But you did have water and electricity here when you first moved in?

Yes, yes, very much so. Yes, yes. It is most important.

And were a lot of the people around here migrants?

What? In my street.

Yeah, when you first moved in? Were they migrants?

[Shakes her head.]

So none of the others were migrants?

No, no, no. Oh, [name deleted] Street at the beginning of [name deleted] Road, it was Housing Commission. When we come here these houses were already there.

In the early 1950's?

Yes, yes, that [name deleted]. Street that runs here.

Yes I know that one.

And up to here the houses were built, they were Housing Commission houses.

So those were the only houses there when you moved in?

Yeah, well that house was here and that one.

The two next door?

And the opposite house was there, and the rest of them they were in between because, [name deleted] Road belonged to one farmer and he sold it and it was divided into blocks and some of them build a house before and then later on [name deleted] Road filled up with the houses.

Yes, so tell me about where you lived before you moved here.

I lived with Dr [name deleted] in [suburb name deleted].

As a young person, so you got married and moved here?

No, no, no, I got married after the war in 1945.

So you and your husband lived with Dr [name deleted]?

Oh, well I married my husband when he was a prisoner of war and I was in Germany in a camp too but I met him after the war. He was Yugoslav and I was Russian [laughs] but we got married and after staying in the camp after the war for four years, we came here as displaced persons and we stayed in Brighton Camp which was disastrous.

So what year did you arrive at Brighton Camp? Was it 1948, 1949?

It was '49.

You said it was a disaster?

Well yes, it was. It was cold and we slept in, oh anyway ...

In those wooden huts?

Yes, well, all of us who come here, there were 200 of us and we were all married couples.

And all displaced persons?

All displaced persons, yes, yes. We received two pound and 50 pennies, as a support from government, well two pound they took away from us because they fed us. There was a kitchen there.

So it was two pounds 50 pennies per week?

Per week, so that left us 50 pennies. Well a packet of cigarettes was 50 pennies.

So what did you do?

Bought cigarettes! [Laughing.]

But you must have been keen to move from there then?

Well then, oh the people were coming to the camp and some of them, the men were invited to go and work for the Hydro. Some of them come from the City Council. And well, Mr [name deleted] he was a Dr of Economy. He was [name deleted] Consul and he wanted a housemaid and they liked me and my husband I suppose, and they took us there and I was part of the family. They didn't treat me as a housemaid.

But you did the housework there?

Oh yes, yes, but Mrs [name deleted] did the cooking because I didn't know how to cook [laughing] and they already had a dishwashing machine and a Bendix to wash, to do the washing.

Oh amazing!

Yes, that washing machine come from America.

So how old were you?

Twenty-three; so they have six children and we have fun because I behaved like a child too I suppose. But the children they are all grown up but they still haven't forgot me. And then they took me and my husband. They fed us. We had a little room and a bathroom separately done and they been extremely kind and they paid me and then my husband worked for City Council. The poor bloke didn't know how to hold a shovel or a pick, come home with blisters and he laughed and said they told me, [name deleted], you don't know how to hold your pick and shovel [laughing]. After that Dr [name deleted] went to Holland with his family and left the baby with me, [name deleted], she was two months old. And of course I stayed in that house and her brother come to live in the house too so that I wouldn't be alone in such a house by myself and my husband. Any way they were kind to me. They were good to me and [name deleted] was my baby and when my daughter was born I kept calling her [name deleted] and my husband would say it's [name deleted] not [name deleted] [laughing]. And we still keep in touch with them. So with the money we earned we bought that block of land.

So you saved.

And the Commonwealth Bank give us a loan. My husband went and applied for it and they give us 1,500 pound, as a loan. Well with that we started building the house. So it was all for fun. We never complained. We never rebelled. We just took it in our stride. And before that when we left there I went to work to [name deleted] Hospital and they were good to me. Matron was especially good to me. So I can't complain; can't complain at all. And then when I had my daughter of course we were short of money, moved in that house, it was cold, it was big. Well it wasn't big but of course living in a shack in the hut there and we didn't have enough blankets but we survived somehow, bit by bit, we had it and

my daughter was three years old I went back to the hospital to work part time at night time only, from six till ten, to earn a little bit of money.

So how long did you do that for?

For ten years [laughing]. And after that one I went to work for a private doctor. So my husband finished work, he come home when I had to leave, so she was never alone.

Then you had another daughter after that or you only had the one daughter?

No I had only one, yes. I have two grand children but only one daughter. So that's my life story here and most of the people have been very kind to us. When we were in Brighton Camp there was a family that adopted us, [name deleted]. Did you hear about [name deleted]? Before your time? These people had a shop there in the house and they invited us every Sunday for lunch and it was baked dinner of course and they had horses and they took us to horse racing in Hobart, in the city here. She looked and said to me; don't bet on my husband's horse, it never comes first anyway.

So they had like a farm near Brighton.

It was [name deleted]. [Name deleted] is next to Brighton. So they took us to Church and fed us every Sunday with a lovely dinner and it was the first time, baked dinner with leg of lamb.

An Australian baked dinner.

Yes, but being hungry for so many years to me it was something absolutely delicious. Still is; leg of lamb to me is something special.

And what do you like about living here?

My dear, I've been here before you were born.

[Deleted.]

Well it's my home. I consider myself more Australian than anything else. Though I speak four languages, but it's my home.

And you helped to build it.

Well, what I could, yes, yes. It was a lot of work. It is solid plaster and to put solid plaster in you put the little, little ...

Lathes.

Yes lathes. Can you imagine me being pregnant and nailing it in?

Oh, you were doing that too?

I was doing that too and you couldn't put the floor on before, the plaster has to go first before the floor is in. I help it, a little bit. It was easy just to nail it in. I could do that [laughing]. The rest I couldn't. No it's, I've been brought up, didn't know how to cook, I didn't know how to do lots of things. I come here, my husband had to cook because I didn't know how to but I learned, I learned, so ...

What don't you like about living here?

Nothing.

So the big tree, that doesn't worry you?

That is an oak tree. We planted it like the Queen of England does it; every time a child is born they plant a tree.

So it's a symbolic tree?

That is a symbolic tree. That tree was planted when my daughter was born.

So you don't want to get rid of it?

No way. I get rid of the house but not of the tree [laughing]. No I'm just joking but I will never get rid of that tree.

But it's costly to have it pruned?

It's costs a lot, yes.

And you don't want it growing over the house because I suppose the leaves get in the gutters?

Oh they go everywhere. The neighbours complain about the leaves when it's windy because it blows across.

So how old is your daughter?

Fifty. Last year she was 50. So the tree is 50 years old. Most of the neighbours, if we discuss it, if I get rid of the tree ...

People don't like to see mature trees chopped down. I think that's pretty universal.

No. The lady up the top she says when my father comes here he sits on the verandah and always looks at your tree. And that one in the front that's a silver birch. That's a European tree.

That's very nice too. It makes the house look nice. So when you first moved in you must have had lots of expectations about what it was going to be like, living here in this house? Is it as you expected? Is it better than you expected?

When we come from Europe here?

Yeah, and when you bought this land and built this house?

Both of us didn't know anything about building or housing or whatever. In Europe it's always there. As you know, you were in Denmark. It's there. It was built, but Australia and Tasmania has got so much land and new comers coming in and they start building, building because there were no houses to buy.

So that was the case when you came here, there were no houses to buy?

Well there were some, but not many.

And they would have been expensive I suppose. Was it cheaper to build yourself?

Yes, yes, it was cheaper to build ourselves than to buy a house, yes. So that was it. It was my husband's choice and I didn't object to it.

So you were happy with the house, even though at the back it's fairly level, this is a steep hill that you're on and there are quite a lot of steps at the front aren't there?

There are not many steps. It doesn't bother me, as long as I don't have a second storey where I have the bedroom up the top.

And it's level at the back isn't it?

Well it's not quite steep. It's steep to come up the hill but that is gradually straightening out more or less.

But you mostly drive when you go to and from. You don't walk, I suppose?

I do for exercise. Sometimes if I have a meeting in town, I know I have two meetings, so I leave the car at home and I walk and catch the bus and come home, oh yes.

It's probably better than worrying about parking.

That's it, very much so, yes, yes.

And are you planning to make any changes to your housing?

No. I can't afford to make any changes [laughing]. The only changes will be, I have to have, is to have it painted inside and repaired because the house is old, it needs constant bits and pieces to do. Not inside but downstairs, the rubbish downstairs; lots of things rubbish, for so many years. I have to get rid of it all, far too much. I am not the only one. I heard from other people that it is the same thing.

That when you're somewhere a long time you just get things, things build up?

Yes.

So why would you need to get rid of them? So you can manage the house better?

No, just to make it tidy my dear, underneath the house is a disaster. It's a second hand shop.

And so with the painting of the house, are you able to afford that?

I worked a few years back with an old gentleman. I cooked for him and looked after him and he paid me. But that was between two of us.

So you've got some money put away?

And with that money I got the house painted?

So it has been recently painted?

Outside.

But not inside?

No. Inside I did it myself a few years.

How old were you when you did that?

Oh goodness gracious girl. How old? I was 65.

How old are you now?

I won't tell you [laughing in a teasing way].

Go on, tell me.

76, yes.

And so have you been thinking of selling?

Very much so, yes, extremely so, the house doesn't bother me much but the outside, the property that I have behind is getting beyond a joke.

So if you sold what would you do, if you had the choice?

I'd like to have a little unit, yes, yes.

What sort of a little unit?

Well like a friend of mine, she sold her house, she lived not far from me; and she bought villa unit with a little bit of garden [stressed] on the front and it is small [stressed] but very cosy; a kitchen and a sitting room she's got two bedrooms and a bathroom, just enough to be independent again not, not too. Oh, but I found it difficult to find. I wouldn't go and live in Glenorchy or that way. I don't like to live up that way.

You'd like to live somewhere around here?

Yes [emphasised] and there is nothing here, not at all. At [name deleted] Avenue they have some villa units there but they are all more or less two stories and I don't like to have steps.

So you have looked at them?

Oh I looked at them. I look now and then. I get sticky beak and have a look.

So if you sold this house do you know what you'd get for it, and whether you'd be able to afford to buy a smaller place?

Well if I'm selling the house I want \$180,000 or more because I went to the auction here in [name deleted] Rd and that old house; that is very, very old and it was sold by auction for \$160,000 and I was flabbergasted, absolutely flabbergasted. Well I say, if they can sell that house, if you can call it a house, I say well I can ask more for mine.

There is a big demand for houses.

I will ask somebody to come here and tidy everything up and do that for me because I could do it before but not anymore.

So what would a villa unit cost? Do you know?

I don't know. I wouldn't buy a villa unit for more than I have got the money. I can't jump over it because I am a pensioner. I live only on the pension and therefore I can't afford to buy a villa unit for

\$300,000 where I'm not going to put myself out, which I wouldn't be able to do. I can't afford it anyway.

So if a group of older women got together and wanted to do some sort of congregate housing where they all paid for their own unit and it was specially built for them; I mean would you be interested in something like that?

But it didn't work. Somewhere on the mainland it didn't work.

So you know about ...

Can you remember?

Oh, WICH.

Didn't some lady start it and then they withdrew?

They couldn't afford it, the housing in Sydney was so costly they just couldn't afford to do it and they didn't get any funding from the government, yeah. I think it's more possible to do something like that here still, because the land values here aren't as high as in Sydney.

Well even Melbourne too they are going overboard.

The prices and they're going up here too.

Yes they are. They are, very much so. I go to ... I get that Real Estate Agent ... Oh where is it? I have it somewhere. You know the real estate agents; they have got the brochures what they sell each week and ...

Yes I know, in Thursday or Friday ...

Yes Friday.

It used to be Thursday.

Yes. I get that [showing the Real Estate Guide] and I look through it every week. Every week I look through it faithfully.

But the places are going so quickly because there is so much demand at the moment.

You see I haven't got enough courage to, like this couple across the street; they bought the house and sold the house afterwards. Well they can afford it. They both work, they're young people and they get a loan from the bank but the bank wouldn't give me a loan. I only live on the pension.

So have you tried to get a loan?

No! I can't get a loan my dear before I've made up my mind what I want to buy and where I want to buy, that's why it doesn't ... I can't put myself in to ask for a loan and try to pay off when I haven't done anything.

So you seem like you are really quite interested in doing that?

Mmm, mmm, mmm, mmm. [Nodding vigorously] It would break my heart to leave the house but I have to. The property's getting too big for me.

So is that what's stopped you from doing anything so far, has the fact that the house is so important to you, has that made it hard to go or to sell?

I suppose it is. For 20 years straight away I said I'm going to sell the house. I'm out! But I'm still here.

And what does your daughter think about you wanting selling?

Oh she doesn't. She says Mum it's up to you. She doesn't want to interfere and she doesn't want to say why don't and what. She never says that. She says do what you think is best for you.

Do you ever think about a retirement unit?

It all depends where and they are very expensive too.

Yeah they can be.

Yes and then you have to pay each week or each month.

Might be a maintenance fee or something ...

It might be a maintenance fee. And then it goes on and on and I think it's not fair. It's not fair. The people who move in the houses and thing like that, they are poor people. Maybe say, not poor, but they can't afford half a million or more to buy a new house. They move, something which is more cheaper for them and then I read in the papers, a thing that says sometimes it costs a lot to live in a house like that, because they charge you for maintenance or for taking the rubbish [emphasised] out or whatever.

So you've got to look at all the costs.

That's right.

Not only how much it costs to go in but how much they charge and if you've got enough left to live on and meet your needs.

That's right. That's true. That's true. That is my opinion of it too. Therefore I think it's easier to buy an independent home unit privately, and then you don't have to pay anything.

Well there's the body corporate though and the body corporate fees sometimes, if it's a stratum titled unit it'd be part of the body corporate; you'd have to contribute something to that and there'd be some joint costs you'd have to contribute too, I think. I mean if you were in a house anyway there are things you would normally have to pay for like maintenance and repairs, plumbing and ...

I do not understand what body corporate does.

Well there are some people I have interviewed have lived in stratum title units and ...

With stratum title they buy it.

You buy just the land the unit is on and there is joint land so you have a shared right to use it. Sometimes you don't own the external walls, so whenever anything is done you have to go to the body corporate and ask them and they decide, you can't decide yourself, so it's not so independent.

That's disastrous. To me it is disastrous. It's not fair.

So I don't know what way there is around that if you wanted a unit where you are completely independent and could make all your own decisions.

What do you mean? A friend of mine bought that villa unit there. There were two of them on the block.

Well perhaps if there are only two, maybe they're on separate titles.

They are on separate titles.

Well that's different.

They are separate titles, extremely so and it's a small unit very nicely done. It's got a little garden and it's in New Town but apparently they start building villa units like that at Kingston. What do they call it?

[Name of suburb deleted]?

No, not at [name of suburb deleted]; it's [name of suburb deleted]. [Deleted] something, [name of retirement village deleted], here is in [name of suburb deleted] but that is completely different. That's very expensive too.

Oh yes there's a kind of nursing home, hostel, retirement village, very popular.

Yes, I go and visit a lady there each month. She is still alive. And no, I'm talking about [name of suburb deleted], a big villa compact there, houses they are all independent villas there. None of them are joined.

The thing about getting a small unit that is completely independent is that there are not many that are that small and have a completely separate title.

Well, there are because, where friend of mine lives there is a separate title. They're on the same block but a separate title completely. She owns the lot.

Was it part of a bigger block of land that was subdivided? Some people are subdividing the back off and there is room for a couple of units.

Her unit is right on the front

Well if there's big front yard it could be a couple of units in the front.

Not the yard. She has very small but she's right on the road at the front. So I just, the only thing is the house is all right but it is difficult for me to manage the garden and all around it, that's it, that's the biggest problem for me.

I wonder if the Council would let you subdivide this block and put a couple of units.

I can't because there's not enough ...

Why is that? Not enough access?

Because there is not enough access to get through. When we built the house we did not talk to the neighbour when he had his fence so we went by that without asking city council about it. It was one foot out where he built his fence, one foot should have been on our place and that foot took all the access out.

So you don't have a driveway?

Well you can squeeze, yes.

But it wouldn't be regulation width.

No, City council wouldn't allow it.

And I suppose you wouldn't want to complain given how he built your shack and did the carpentry ...

He did the shed but he couldn't do the fine work that was done here. That gentleman he was a cabinet maker.

So you don't have a lot of options to convert this house or this yard to something that would be more suitable for you, without knocking the house down which would be costly and wasteful if you can sell it.

It would be easier to sell it than to build it.

So you have gone through all that and already decided that would be the best thing to do.

Yes, but I would like to still stay here in [name of suburb deleted] or somewhere around that way. I belong to bush walking club and lots of our elderly couples bought the units there. That's what I'm trying to tell you, in [name of suburb deleted].

If you could think of the name of the place.

I have to think of the name of the place.

So it is a kind of retirement village?

Yes it is. It is a retirement village.

It's not [name of retirement village deleted]. There's a very big retirement village there.

It is very big, and they took us there about ten years ago to have a look at it.

But that is one where you don't own the house isn't it. Where you pay a certain amount to go in and then you pay a fee.

I didn't go into details of it. I know several of them moved there and they tried to tell, to ask me to come and stay there too.

So you still could?

Oh I didn't ask too many questions. They have a housing corporate ... Well anyway they have someone who takes the rubbish out and they have to pay monthly fees, all that part of it. But most of them who live there, they are all married couples, so you get double pension.

Oh yes.

Excuse me saying it.

So that means you're really better off staying here.

I do not know my dear. I don't know myself anymore whether I am better off here.

Because you're finding it burdensome, the upkeep?

The garden, the garden is my biggest problem.

So how much does it cost you to pay someone to mow the lawn?

Oh the Health Department, the man come up as I told you before, the man come and help me to clip little bit the bushes and take the rubbish away.

I thought you paid someone to mow the lawn.

Yes I do but that's separate, nothing to do with them.

Yes but I was thinking, is it cheaper for you to pay the maintenance fee down at [name of suburb where the retirement village is deleted] or pay someone to mow the lawn here?

I don't know. I don't have my lawn mowed every week. We had such a dry summer.

You didn't need it for ages.

I didn't. It was such a dry summer and I didn't water it at all. I just let it go, so I haven't seen him since before Christmas.

You could just reduce the amount you look after. You could just let a bit of the back go into wilderness and just mow around the house so you could manage around the house.

I don't want to leave it until it becomes you can't walk in the bush and the snakes and goodness knows what. The only thing I miss is my frogs. I had beautiful frogs and I had the big lizard and I lost him. I don't know. It was there. It always greeted me and I had to step over it, and it's gone.

And the frogs are gone too?

Yes our frogs are gone several years back. They disappeared. I'm not the only one complaining that the frogs are gone. We went bush walking on Mount Field and they were telling the frogs are disappearing there too. No but my lizard, it was that big. It was gorgeous! And somebody come up and say [name deleted], what you feed the lizard with, and I said I didn't feed him. He feeds himself, but I haven't seen him for a few days.

So it's only recently you haven't seen him?

Oh yes. Oh yes. Like the birds come here and sing for me.

Perhaps it's got babies or something.

It's autumn time. They don't have any babies.

Maybe because it's been dry. [Pause.] What does home mean to you?

What my house means to me?

Your home.

It's my life. It's my life my dear. It's my home. It's my life.

So who you are, is very much part of this house.

Yes very much part of me, especially, we started building it and watched every inch grow.

And it's not too hard to manage here is it.

The house itself? No not at all.

So if you were to sell you would probably only sell if something happened to make it harder to do what you do now, like if you had a fall or you weren't well. I mean some older people they stay in their house and they're right and then they move when there's a problem but they don't even think of moving until there's a problem.

Well that's with me too, except till I have a problem with something then I will have no option to move, to a nursing home I suppose.

Not many people end up in nursing homes.

Well it all depends on the person.

So what would you think about living in a nursing home?

No thank you. Not yet. I've still got my wits.

So you think people in nursing homes don't have their wits? [Laughing.]

Oh well they are sick people. They are sick people and I've got a friend that I visit.

Oh, of course you know a lot because you go to them.

She is sick and you just sit there. She was a very active, very clever woman and she bred and born Tasmania, Hobartian, I should say; and she sit in that little room and watch TV and lunch and dinner and everything is done for her. And if I would sit there, day and night in my chair I would lose my wits. Wouldn't you?

Oh yes, because you're not part of things anymore.

No, and I look at her and when I come in, lately she has forgotten my name and we know each other for forty years and knowing her before it makes me very sad, extremely sad. Other one I went to visit and she was paralysed but her eyes talked to me and she still recognised me and I said I will come at Christmas time and see you and she passed away before Christmas and I said to her son I promised to see your Mum at Christmas time and he said well she couldn't wait [laughing].

So, she was one of the ones you used to visit at Christmas time and take presents to, at?

Some I do, but not presents, lilies, Christmas lilies. Always take flowers with me, which is, you know when I go to see that lady there, I always take something from the garden.

And you've got lilies in your garden. Christmas lilies?

They're gala lilies. You pay a dollar each lily if you want to buy them. That makes me very sad and I am afraid I believe in euthanasia, excuse me saying it, I shouldn't and when I told the priest he nearly chopped my head off. It is sad. It is difficult to live alone in the house by yourself, extremely so.

What's the hardest thing?

It gets lonely and it's depressing, regardless that I belong to several associations. That keeps me going. I go out and meet people and talk to people or just listen to or whatever. But to stay at home weeks and month just like that, it's no good.

There's no easy answer is there because you said yourself you don't, you find it hard to make new friends now because it takes a lot of energy to get to know people.

That's right, extremely so.

But you have friends. You have a lot of friends but they are all people you have to visit aren't they?

Well I had a lot of friends. We are all getting old and I said to you some of them passed away very quickly, one after another and they were close friends, but to make new friends I [inaudible] shy off.

So do many people visit you here?

Sometimes, sometimes the telephone doesn't ring for a week then all of a sudden I will have three calls in one day or something like that.

This is why I like the idea of cohousing. At least there are people around and it's not so lonely.

That's true. It is true.

But if it were possible to do some sort of little project where it was possible to get some people together who've got a house and therefore have got some money to put in. If they were people who wanted to live together, you could do something, even if it was quite small and it would be less lonely.

I believe in that too. Yes that's quite true. I believe in that; extremely so, extremely so.

There are some older women in Hobart who want to do that. I suppose the problem is finding the right block of land.

Very much so.

One of them goes to Women Tasmania a lot and she is a very cluey woman and she said why not use the schools because with less children some of the schools will be empty and there will be all that land there and you could do something with the school grounds.

Which school?

I don't know which school. I think on the Eastern Shore there might be a school that's empty. That's what she was thinking of.

Could be. Eastern Shore is nice too.

Well it's quite sunny over there and there's a nice view. So she's on the Eastern Shore. Would it worry you to be on the Eastern Shore?

No, no. It's no distance there.

So you just have to weigh it up, if the right kind of housing is there and it's affordable ...

Yeah, well a friend of mine sold a house here in [name deleted] Street and got a unit there and it's very nice. It's got a lovely view from there.

Near the water?

No, no, no she's more in, but she is somehow up the hill and she has a lovely view from there.

She can see across the water?

Yes still a little bit. Yes. Very nice.

There are some very nice views over there.

Yes but the lady was sick and it was done on auction and she went there and she saw it and her son is a lawyer so he went to the auction with her [laughing] and she made a good bargain. I mean if you have a lawyer next to you, you know how to bargain for it anyway but it was an auction and she said there was hardly anybody there, so she just got it.

So when was that?

Two years ago.

Because the housing market has really picked up since then. Two years ago it was a buyers' market but now it's not.

She sold her house for very good money here in [name deleted] Street, but she was looking around all the time.

Which is what you do too?

No I don't. I look in the paper but she sat in the car and went around.

With a real estate agent?

No she just went around and looked at what was advertised.

It's a good way to keep in touch with the actual prices and values because sometimes looking in there you can't tell the standard of the place but if you go and look for yourself you start to get an idea of what you have to pay for a reasonable place.

Over here in [name deleted] Street it was last year or the year before, they were just selling units, so I just be a sticky beak I went to have a look. It was open.

Were they new units?

No they were not; and I had a look at it.

Didn't like it? Were they boxes?

That's just it, just the boxes. That's what they were, extremely so.

Because somebody said to me I don't want to end up in a concrete box.

Yes, yes, yes. It was a box. Yes. It was a little bit neglected but not much. It needed a little bit of painting and tidying up. But ...

Not for you?

And then I forget and I just look at the paper and think about it and that's as far as I go.

So if you don't want to live in a box what's important to you? If you were to move to something else, what would you like to have there? You said a little garden?

That's what I said.

You said a view.

I love my herbs. I have lots of different herbs in the garden.

Sorrell?

Sorrell and Greek oregano, and basil and chives, and parsley of course and bits and pieces; I don't like to part with it. With the Housing Commission, I need to have a look at it and be explained more. With the housing commission, the villa units you have got here. They don't belong to the Housing Commission.

Which ones?

Well any, you have so many. I don't know where they are and I don't know the details of them. I look at different things but I want to know first of all can I afford it and if I have to pay.

[Deleted.]

[Tape stopped].

Interviewee 9

How long have you lived here?

Ah about, let me see, we had this house built, how long would it be? About 30 years, I suppose.

And where did you live before you moved here?

We lived on a farm out [name of farm deleted], about 12 miles out and when my parents died we moved in here to [name deleted] Street, rented a house down [name deleted] Street; and then when the boys went away to the war, three of them went away to the war, my sister-in-law had this place built.

So the boys, these were your brothers?

Yes. None of them married.

So you've been here, you've been in this whole area all of your life.

Yes, yes, all of my life.

So you've only had two main places where you've lived, out at [name of farm deleted] and in the town.

Yes.

And what do you like about living here?

Well I like it because I've got a lot of friends, good friends and you know it's quite convenient here really.

I thought that as well.

Yes that's right. I have someone to come and do my garden and everything's all right so I'm very lucky aren't I.

Yeah. Do you find that very expensive, having someone to do your garden?

Oh it is really, but still I manage all right, mmm

And, what about your shopping?

My niece takes me shopping every Thursday, so if I want anything I've only got to ring her up and she'll come and get me.

So she doesn't live too far away?

No, down at [name deleted] Street?

And where do you shop?

Down at the supermarket.

Just in town here?

Yeah.

And what don't you like about living here?

What don't I like? I don't know. I like everything.

You like everything. Nothing you don't like? [Both laugh.] That's fantastic. What about the cold in winter?

Oh the cold, still we've got to put up with that haven't we, especially when was it on Saturday, the power went off and I've got to depend on electricity for heating.

Mmm.

It wasn't so good.

No. It must have been quite cold.

Yes it was cold.

So how did you manage?

I managed all right. I should have gone back to bed really but still I couldn't have turned the hot blanket on could I.

No, and you've got no alternative form but electric.

No. We had an invalid brother and we were both working and we couldn't leave him with an open fireplace so we had to start off with oil and we found that too expensive so we changed to electricity.

So you've got good heating as long as you've got electricity.

Yeah.

And it's economical

And it's not bad until the power goes off.

And so was your brother was he injured in the war?

No, no, no he was invalid all his life really. He had polio when he was small.

So as well as brothers who went to the war, you had one brother that you always cared for.

I cared for another brother, [name deleted], he had emphysema. Oh I seem to have cared for everyone.

I cared for another lady who had a stroke, Nikita's mother, that's when I hurt my back, lifting her, thinking I was a nurse at the time and hurt my back.

A lot of nurses hurt their backs too.

Yeah.

Does that cause you any problems now, your back?

Oh it does occasionally, yes.

Any pain?

Yes. I use a walking stick of course.

So you don't find it so easy to walk far then?

No. I have someone come here and do my housework.

So do you go out much?

I'm out every day. [Laughs.] I'm always out. I'm not letting it stop me. I'm still getting around. I belong to the hospital auxiliary and we have our meeting on Wednesday. Not that I can do much but I can cook. I love cooking. I always cook for this. [Laughs.]

So you cook here?

Yes.

And what do you make?

Oh all sorts of things, cakes especially.

So for fund-raising functions?

Funds, yes. That's right.

And, is where you live now different from how you expected it to be when you first moved in? Did you have some thoughts about what it would be like living here?

No, no, no, no, no, no. No thoughts at all.

I was saying to [name deleted] as we came in, it's a very sensible house. It's a low maintenance house.

That's right and it's very convenient too you know.

There's not a lot of painting to be done.

No, no, no, no.

And there's no windows that are going to need replacing.

No. I had it painted a while ago, just before Easter, under the eaves. Cos some people when they build houses they don't think about the maintenance, but this house is 30 years old and ... About 30 yeah.

Did you get advice about what was a good sort of house to build?

No. We just sort of picked this design ourselves out of quite a few of the others that the chap brought up from Hobart, the builder, for us to look at.

So it was a Hobart builder who did that?

Yeah.

And you've got the ramp out the front. So this was for your brother? Was he in a wheelchair?

Yes that's right. Yes that's right, a wheelchair.

So you must find it quite handy for yourself now.

Oh yes that's right. And I've had all the conveniences put in the bathroom and the shower; you know the bars, in the toilet, which is quite handy.

They were all there from the start?

Mmm.

It makes a difference when you give some thought to that kind of thing when you build a house.

Oh that's right. Yes.

So if you hadn't had a disabled brother perhaps it wouldn't have been done that way

No. That's right.

And it wouldn't have such a good house for you now, when you're older.

Because he lived here. And we have the grabs, the bars down the side of the wall

And can tell me about your neighbours or about your friends in the town?

Oh I've got some good neighbours. The chap next door said to me yesterday oh I'll come hang your washing out for you. He lives on his own, [name deleted]. He said I'll come and hang your washing out any time you want.

How old's he?

Oh he'd be in his fifties or sixties I suppose. Sixties yes that's right.

And does he live on his own?

Yes. He's divorced from his wife.

And what about some of your other neighbours, or the people you're on the hospital auxiliary with? Can you tell me about some of them? Do they live nearby here? Or some of them might live further out of the town I suppose.

Yes that's right. Yeah. We've got another old chap who lives next door, he's Lithuanian. He's very good.

He's on his own as well?

He's on his own. Oh his wife's in Hobart but she comes up occasionally. But he likes being up here.

And you like being here.

Yeah.

You wouldn't think of living in Hobart because of the services. I mean some people they wouldn't live anywhere else.

[Laughing.] *Oh no, no, no.*

Some people want to be near the hospital but you have the multi-purpose centre here.

We've got the centre here. Yeah. Yes, we're well catered for here really.

And are you planning to make any changes to your housing?

No, no to go to the cemetery will be the next thing to do, I think. [Laughing.]

Well you could be one of the lucky ones, who just lives out your life in your home.

Yeah.

So that doesn't make it very complicated does it? There's nothing here; there's no repairs, renovations, changes.

No, no, no.

That's amazing.

No, no, no. I'm quite happy.

Nothing causes you any trouble?

No, no.

It's not too big for you to look after?

No. 'Tis really. It's three bedrooms, but still I, you know if I have someone staying occasionally it's handy.

So who comes to stay?

Relations. Nieces and nephews.

And where do they live?

Well one lives in Melbourne that's coming over this month or he says he's coming to see me. And then some live in Launceston and some live in Hobart.

It sounds like you've got quite a few.

Mmm.

So it must be pretty important to you to have the extra bedrooms.

Yes.

So when they come to stay might you use two bedrooms at one time?

Yes, yes.

Or do you find with that third bedroom that you have another use for it.

No, I've only got single beds in each bedroom see. [Laughs.]

So if you've got two people stay they'd stay one in each room.

Yeah, one in each room.

So how often do you have two people stay?

Not that often really.

What I was getting at was that just from what I've read a lot of people in the past have made the assumption that when a person's older they only need a little granny flat.

Yes that's right.

But of course having somewhere where people can stay is very important. But another thing is sometimes people want extra room for some other reason like their hobby or something like that.

Yes that's right or their library, or anything really.

So you have a library?

No. I love reading but I haven't got a library.

But you don't find you wouldn't like to be in a place smaller than this?

No, no. I suppose if I had to be I would you know.

But not out of choice.

No.

By the sound of it.

No, no. Because the units down there, they're lovely really aren't they but still I don't know whether I'd want one or not.

They're beautiful aren't they; very well designed, a very sunny aspect.

Especially the ones with the two bedrooms, but I wouldn't be any better off there than I am here really I suppose.

And you're settled here so you'd have the upheaval of moving.

Yeah that's right.

And well you're not planning to sell clearly

Oh no, no, no.

And you're not planning to move into a retirement unit.

Oh no, no, no.

And you've got a fantastic housing situation so it's not a very complicated discussion then but you said well if you had to you'd move to a retirement unit. So there may be, like if there was something with your health something unforeseen ...

Yes, yes

Where you became unwell ...

Yes if I wasn't well enough to look after myself, well I'd just have to.

You would consider a retirement unit then?

Mmm.

So you know, you must sometimes think of that as a possibility. So do you have any thoughts ...

No I don't give any thought to that.

You don't think what it would be like to live with a group of other people.

No I just live from day to day.

That's a good strategy I think.

Yeah that's right. One thing here, I'm close to the church. I'm a great churchgoer and I'm able to walk up to the church,

Just round the corner, yes, Peggy was saying that.

I'm able to walk up there without any trouble.

So as well as attending church and seeing people before and after, do you have any involvement with the church?

Well I have done in the past. I was a Sunday school teacher for about fifty years.

So you must know a lot of the congregation quite well.

[To other person present.] [I taught] *some of your boys, didn't I?*

Some of these people do they visit here?

No, no. I don't see much of them.

So how do you feel about having visitors, like with us coming today?

Oh I love visitors. Mmm

You don't mind making scones for them?

No I love visitors.

I suppose you must make pretty good scones. So there's not very much that would cause you to make any changes to your housing other than your health, if something went wrong with your health.

No.

So what does growing older here in this house then mean to you?

I suppose I don't think of that really, you know.

So you've been here so long and you're so settled here.

So long, that's right really.

So perhaps, putting it another way, because we talked about moving into a retirement unit, sometimes people can't see what something means until they lose it.

No.

So do you think what it would be like for you were you to lose your housing here? That way you might be able to get to what it means to be here.

Oh yeah that's right. Oh no. I don't think that'll ever happen.

So you don't think about it for that reason.

No, no, no. I don't think about those sort of things. What happens to me will be.

The sort of thing I'm thinking of is for example the fact that you were here with your sister and your brother, so a lot of your own personal history would be tied up in this house and your memories.

Not so much in this house as out when we lived on the farm, when we grew up out there. There was eight of us in the family.

So when you said the boys went to the war there were two sisters, one disabled brother.

Two sisters were married and one sister who lived with me.

So there were four girls?

Four girls and four boys.

One disabled brother and three brothers who went to war.

Three brothers, yes.

And did they all come back?

Yes.

So at [name deleted] ... So that was a farm?

Yes.

I've not interviewed anyone in your circumstances before and it influences the sort of questions you need to ask. So I will ask you a more general question. What does home mean to you?

It means everything. [Laughs.] Can't do without a home.

So how does it make your life good? So you are very happy here?

Very happy. I've been away to quite a few places visiting overseas, not overseas but over in Australia and I'm always glad to get home, mmm.

I was glad to get back too.

Yes I was pleased to get back.

Because here you've got control over what you do?

Yeah that's right. I'm a pretty independent sort of person.

You've got your own space and it enables you to make a contribution to the community here too. It seems over the years you've made a big contribution.

Oh I have too.

Do you find now that because you're older that you get treated differently from how you used to be treated?

I think so.

In what ways?

Oh, more attention [laughing].

Oh fantastic.

More attention yeah.

So you don't find people treat you like you're losing your marbles or like you're a child.

Oh no, no, no, no, no. I've got a lady who rings me up every night, at about nine o'clock, every night she rings up and has a talk because she's lonely too. Are you going to see her are you, [name deleted]? She rings me up and says I'm that lonely, she says I'll ring you up and have a talk. So she has a talk for about three-quarters of an hour I suppose.

That's a long time.

It is a long time.

And how do you feel about that?

She says the same thing over and over again.

[Conversation deleted.]

So you're living on your own and being on your own, you do...

See night time's the worst really isn't it, than the day. There's nothing on TV, not that will interest me anyway.

So what do you do to deal with loneliness?

Oh reading. I love reading. I used to do a lot of knitting but I've got sick of that now and I don't do that so much now. I used to do that in winter.

That's a nice thing to do. So when you feel lonely and you really wanted company, what choices do you have about that?

Well I ring up people and they ... My brother at [name of town deleted], he used to be very sick and he was in hospital and I went up to him one day. He comes down to me.

So do you see him regularly?

Yes that's right.

So is that planned or does it just happen when you feel like it?

Just when we feel like it.

So about how often would that happen?

About once a fortnight or so I think.

So if you go up there, how do you get up there?

Well I went up there with our Minister. She went up to take a service up there on Easter Sunday afternoon and she came here for lunch and she said oh, how about coming up to Ross to see Bill and I said oh, I'd love to. And she said, oh well you can come up with me.

So she came and had lunch with you at your place?

Yes.

So you've got a lot of strong connections in this community.

Yes.

And so how often do you feel lonely?

Oh no not at all. Like on Saturday when the power went out I felt down.

Feeling down, that's different from lonely. When a person feels down, that might be when they want to reach out to other people.

Yes that's right.

Yeah. Sometimes if you're having a bit of trouble and you share it with someone else it doesn't seem so bad.

Yeah that's right. Well I love doing crossword puzzles I've got my books there.

So someone comes once a week to clean, [name deleted].

[Name deleted.] Yes.

And how often does she spend here?

Two hours. She hangs the washing out. I put my washing on in the morning and change my bed and everything and she puts the washing out and sometimes she'll come back and get it in.

But what happens if she doesn't? You can't live here anymore.

No I can't

So that's a paid worker from the hospital?

From the hospital, yeah.

It's a good thing.

Yes.

So do you talk to her at all? Is it just the help you appreciate or is it nice to have her come?

Oh she's a lovely person.

Does she have a cup of tea and a chat?

Oh she won't have a cup of tea. I've often wanted her to have a cup of tea but she won't have one.

Has to go on to the next person?

Yeah.

[Interview ended.]

Interviewee 10

How long have you lived here?

What here in this house?

Yes.

About 52 years.

That's a very, very long time.

It is a long time.

And where did you live before you moved here?

Various little hops and jumps; over in the lovely blue place in the street down here, that used to be a residence attached to the chemist, [name deleted] will show you the lovely colour it is. You might like it. I was there for ...

The purple place, no I don't like that.

Oh purple is it. Well I call it blue but anyway no, I don't know how long we were there, about twelve months I think after we were married. It must've been longer than that.

So you came here when you got married?

Yeah. I've lived in the district all my life actually. We had a farm out of the town, oh my parents did so then after I married well, we lived in [name of town deleted] and I lost my husband in 1993. He didn't have a very nice life really. He was an ex POW from Japan, so therefore he suffered quite a bit, but, you know; too young really.

My father had quite a difficult life too. He served in New Guinea. He didn't have a particularly happy life.

No. It's very difficult to see them suffering while you're trying to do as much as you possibly can for them.

Yeah, and often it catches up with them when they get old.

Yeah. Well he wasn't very old you see. He was in his sixties.

Gee.

It was terrible. And that's too young.

[Conversation deleted.]

What do you like about living here?

Oh, the friendliness of the people I think, and it's just been I gather you'd say, it's been home to me for so long that I just wouldn't be happy anywhere else. I've got a daughter that lives in Victoria and badly wants to build a granny flat and take me over there but no way, I mean I couldn't, that's just not my cup of tea to just pull up stakes and go. I wouldn't know anybody. Here, you know, you know people and they pop in and have a talk or a cup of coffee or whatever ... Would you like a cup of coffee?

Mmm ...

Yes.

We already had a cuppa.

Oh yeah right. Well yes that's about it. I've got nice neighbours and it's a nice area really you know. I just sort of know everybody all round, if you can see you know ... Oh well, you get your doctors and you get your hospital and the complex down there well, where would you be without it I just don't really know. The other night I rang [name deleted], what was it a five-ish or something like that and you know it's not long and they're on your doorstep that sort of thing, you know you don't get that treatment everywhere.

No, not even in all country towns, by a long way.

Well you wouldn't in city towns either would you?

No you wouldn't get it at all there. You'd have to get up and go to the after hours service, probably.

I don't know if people realise just how fortunate we are. Well I certainly do. And I think most people do and you know you've got the staff are nice. I've had quite a bit of time down there in the hospital recently over the last three or four years, little sort of breaks. And you know you just couldn't wish for anything nicer. It's just like home.

They're all people you know I suppose.

Mmm, well if you don't you soon get to know them. A lot of the younger staff I don't know but I mean you know they're very friendly and very nice and the older, they're not sisters now, NRs aren't you.

[Interjection deleted.]

RNs, I get it the wrong way around. RNs they are termed now. And as I said if you didn't know them you very soon would but I know most of those anyway because most of them are local and so you know it's all very nice from the patient's point of view. I don't know about it the staff's point of view. But you're not interviewing me for that. You're interviewing me for my point of view. So it's all very, very nice. You couldn't wish it to be better really.

And what don't you like about living here?

I don't think there's anything. Doesn't seem to be does there. No. No nothing really. I mean some people say it's isolated but it's not really; you're only three quarters of an hour, an hour to Hobart and I mean if you go to Melbourne or something that's only a suburb isn't it? Or semi suburb, so you know I don't think it's isolated at all. You're on the highway between Hobart and Launceston. Well you're about in the centre of Tasmania. That's virtually what happens here, isn't it.

So it's very central in fact.

Mmm, it is.

And how often would you need to go to town anyway? Do you often need to go?

The only thing I have to go for is dental treatment and other than that, well I need it now but I don't feel well enough to have to have it but, but that's the only thing. Everything else is here.

So you go there for dental check-ups?

Well yeah, have to. There's no one else here unfortunately. We have had a dentist and a very good one I might add but of course he's retired now and uh, so it's a matter of if you need treatment and at my age you wouldn't think you would but I do, badly. It's just making not so much the effort, I don't like going to dentists anyway, who does but if I had the health yes, I would be there.

So you still have some of your own teeth.

Three.

And they need attention.

They sure do; can't be very obvious then. I hope they're not.

No I can't see.

Oh that's good then.

So when you first moved in here, I suppose your family grew up here, in this house.

I've only got one daughter.

And she grew up here?

Yes well, she worked in Hobart but this was her home, until she met a Victorian and went to Victoria unfortunately for us but she's had quite a happy life so that's the main thing. That's what it's all about isn't it.

Yes.

So, she's got two girls.

You couldn't want more for your children than that.

No, that's true and she's quite happy.

You said you came from this area. You've lived in this area all your life but you haven't lived in [name of town deleted] all your life? So you moved to [name of town deleted] when you got married?

Mmm, mmm.

When you moved into this house you must have had certain expectations about what it was going to be like moving here, and I'd be interested to know what you found was better than you expected about living here, for example

Well my work was here. I was teaching at the school and that was very convenient. My husband worked at the school and that was very convenient.

So he was a teacher too?

No, he was a groundsman.

Oh wow.

And so everything just suited us fine really. Our work was here and.

So you just settled here.

We settled here.

And you spent your working life here?

That's exactly right.

That's the most amazing thing to have just worked in the one place all that time.

Oh yes, I didn't work when I had my daughter. I didn't work until she was back at school and when she went back to school I went back relief teaching.

So you were able to do that? There was work here for you?

Oh yes, plenty.

And is there anything that is worse than you expected about living here?

I don't think so.

Not even about the house? Did you build the house?

No the house was built but we've added to the house but no the house, oh, excuse me.

It's a very neat clean, well-maintained house. It looks like you've got everything completely under control here.

Well I really think if you're going to make it your home you've really got to do that. I mean it's no good buying into a house then finding, you know, you're not putting what you can into it. You know, I mean back in my day things weren't easy I mean, the money wasn't around, not like some of these farmers that had money, although they didn't did they, they earned it. And so you know your home was everything to you and the little bit of furniture you got, you had to get it on time payment, or we did, had to get it on time payment.

So you value it and you've looked after it?

Oh yes. Yeah you valued it, mmm.

Can you tell me about your neighbours?

Oh, what do you want to know about my neighbours? I've got some very good neighbours actually.

Yeah. That's the sort of thing I wanted to hear.

Yeah. We're very, very lucky, have been. Well my aunt lived in the house next door actually and it was through her that we were able to buy this house because it was a relative of hers that owned it.

Mmm ...

He owned four houses actually. And so that was a help, but since she died of course there's been different ones in and out but ... well, if you don't worry them they don't worry you. There's a group there now that evidently, are nothing wonderful but I mean they don't worry me.

In this house here?

Mmm.

So how well do you know your neighbours in this street?

I know all the others except these. I don't know these very well but that's probably my own doing. I just you know, if I see them I wave and say hullo other than that, that's it. And I can't say anything about them at all because I just don't find I've got any reason to say anything about them. You know some people will say, oh how do you get on with your next-door neighbours but I mean, okay. It's all right.

Well there's [name deleted] on this side.

Yes, [name deleted] here and her sister's on the place on the corner. Now they're not in your door all the time. That's one thing about living in an area that you haven't got people on your doorstep all the time. I don't mind people coming. I like people coming but you don't want them, you know, in and out all day and every day.

No.

And ah, which is very good; suits me fine. One of the chappies works down at the hospital. Is he back at work? [To other person present:] Is [name deleted] back at work?

[No.]

Oh. He's, I can see him from here, his house and I can see him when he's outside. But he's been wonderful to me you know any time, day or night if you need to go to the hospital you just, ah, contact me and I'll be there and he will too. He's taken me down two or three, three or four times maybe.

Is he an RN?

No he works at the hospital. He's a groundsman who drives the ambulance.

Does he take you down?

Oh yes, ambulance driver.

[He mows the lawn.]

Does he live on his own too?

No, he's got a wife and three children.

So do you have much to do with any of the children who live around here?

Well there aren't any children that live around here, only next door. They've got two littlies now. I don't know what age. I suppose the little girl would probably be three/four and the little boy would be eighteen months perhaps. I don't really see that much of them, only hear them, so.

As a teacher you must have an interest in children.

Oh, I see yes. Oh no, you do but then you've been away from it for as long as I have you sort of get out of all those habits and you get to be an old granny [laughs]. You know what it's like [name deleted].

[Comment deleted.]

I don't know what you mean by that, being an old granny.

Oh well you grow up and they grow up and you're just an old granny to them.

To very young children you mean?

No. The eldest girl is 17 if you believe it and the other one's 14, June, she'll be fourteen in June. So one's finished schooling and the other one's right into schooling, mmm.

And how often do you see them?

Now that's a good question. See I used to go over once every 12 months, but of course I don't now, haven't been over for a number of years but unfortunately but it's just too much of an effort and I just couldn't cope with it, yeah I couldn't cope with it now.

So they come over here?

Yes. I have to hold me daughter down. When mother gets sick all she wants to do is come home to mother, but I mean she's got home and husband and two girls and she can't always be tripping across. She tells me last night; we ring every night of course. She told me last night that one of the girls are coming over in June. And I said, well I don't really think that's necessary and I don't think it's

necessary because I think it's making her very tired. She's had a few problems and it's just well it's tiring I feel and if she gets a few holidays and the girls get holidays. Well [name deleted] won't get holidays but the other one, [name deleted], will be on holidays so that'd be all right for her I suppose. And then there's their sport, netball; weekends are taken up with that. They both play and they've both got to go to practice on a Thursday night and [their father's name deleted] can take them of a Thursday night to practice because he's not working so that relieves [daughter's name deleted] but then she's involved in the jolly thing, involved in the netball you know, umpires and all this.

It's a very busy time of life having teenagers.

Well it is, yes. So I prefer her to, you know, keep her time and let her be devoted to the girls and the home. See come weekends, she works every day bar weekends, well then everything's got to be done, the girls are very good, they have to work of course and uh, that's their spending money, their work and they get paid fairly but well rightly so, they deserve it.

Her daughters? So what sort of work do they do?

Housework.

Around the house? She pays them, so she works and the girls do housework and she pays them to do it?

That's exactly right, mmm. She works at the hospital over there. She's in charge of the catering part of the hospital, yeah; which is a bigger complex than this one of course. She likes it and she needs the money, and these young ones they're buying homes. They were telling me the other night they're investing in land.

That's very wise isn't it?

Well I suppose. I got a bit of a shock and [daughter's name deleted] said, you know, oh well I know the block that she's speaking of and she said, we've been to have a look at that tonight, she said. We're going to buy it and I got a terrible shock and said, whatever do you want that for and she said we're looking to the future because she said, the girls won't always be at home and if you want to buy now's the time to buy and, uh so they've decided that they'd buy this block of land and uh, so they are buying the block of land because they reckon the home that they've got will be far too big.

So they're thinking of their own future.

Yes.

And where did they buy it then?

Well they are in [name of town deleted]; it's right on the Murray Valley Highway right in between [name of town deleted] and [name of town deleted]. That's a broad outlook of course but it is broad over there.

So your daughter's grown up in the country and gone back to it to live, but in Victoria.

Yeah, yeah well she didn't really grow up in the ... I suppose she grew up here, this was her home but she worked in Hobart. She worked in [name of shop deleted] in Hobart. I've noticed they've had to sell too. She was there for twelve years I think she worked at Ash Besters so ...

So are you planning to make any changes to your housing in the future?

Not while I can cope where I am.

Do you think about? It must be a very easy place to cope with because you've got some restrictions now with your breathing but what would influence you changing, like either moving from here? I don't know what other changes you could make? I don't think there is anything that you could change here that would make it easier to live here. It looks like it's very easy to live here.

Well you've got all the services that you need. I have the nurses come twice a week.

It's a great place to live. I think I will retire here.

There's meals-on-wheels.

I've only seen good news since I've been here.

Yes they have meals on wheels and, the nurses come twice a week and that's, well I can have home help but I pay for my own help because I like the lady I've got and I've had her for so long, and she knows me and I know her and she's very trusting and so, yes I could have home help, through the DVA.

She does a good job, doesn't she?

Oh yes, nothing's a trouble to her. She's fantastic. Oh, it's not her day until tomorrow; every Tuesday.

So you're not planning to sell?

No, not unless I had to. I booked in down at the homes but I mean that's only for the future. I thought I might be down there sooner than I anticipated, but ...

There's not a big difference between living there and living here is there?

Oh, yes and no.

Do you think you'd have more support and help there?

No, I don't think you get more support and help there. That's not it at all, but it's not home.

Yes.

Are you with me?

Mmm, so can you tell me then what home means to you?

Oh well, that's a little bit difficult I suppose but it just means that you've got all your own things around you. You can do as you please, not that you wouldn't be here I suppose. But no not really, I just I mean guess I'd have visitors there same as I would have here but they say the house is open to anyone who likes to come and, no I'm quite happy as long as I can cope. This word cope keeps popping up at me.

This is your place and you've lived here a long time and you have it, as you want it.

Yes, mmm, mmm, so.

But you do think about moving to a retirement unit as a possibility if you needed to, if something happened and you needed to.

Well if I couldn't cope I would have to.

That's the only circumstance under which would move, so it's not in a way about staying really, you choose to stay here if you can?

Yes, that's right.

And the only reason would be if you could not stay. I mean in the retirement unit, some people get lonely when they're older and there's probably more company down at the retirement units. But you're not short of company.

Not for me I don't think. No, I don't think that I'd be, I've given it a lot of thought of course and there's a room there begging for me to go to, but no it's not my cup of tea I'm afraid. Not while I can cope at home.

To make a new start?

Mmm.

So what does growing older here in this house mean to you?

Oh well I don't know. I suppose it's always been home. That's a bit difficult to say that one. It's always been home and I suppose you look upon it as home and that's virtually all I could say to that.

Well as an outsider I could say that it looks to me like it's not a struggle for you growing older here. For some people growing older in their home might mean it's a struggle for whatever reason, you know it might be a big yard or it might be trees or it might be that the place needs painting or the roof needs to be redone or things like that.

It does. Did you look up at it?

I didn't see it. No. So there we are. The house looks so good I couldn't have imagined there was a fault with it.

Oh it's a couple of years since I've had it painted but I'm very fortunate there. I've got somebody who comes in and cuts my lawns for me and is responsible for the garden and then the lass that comes in and does the housework, she pulls a few weeds occasionally. Yes and I've just had to turn my back on weeds and edges that I used to keep cut.

It's a choice. You can do that. For some people that would be enough of a worry for them to want to move to a place with a smaller yard if they couldn't keep on top of it.

Well, I kind of feel that I'd like to be able to do what I used to do but I can't so I just have to turn my back on that and hope that somebody else will come along and do it and I've got somebody else to come along and do it. The two that I've got are very, very helpful and I don't know, it seems as though they've taken it on as their own you know, do it as they wish, they want to do and, so

And you're quite happy about that because you've turned your back on it I suppose.

Well I've had to because I can't. I mean after my husband went I used to spend all my time in the garden, well most of it when I wasn't playing golf, but I can't do it so you can't do it and I just have to go along with that.

Well that's a coping strategy. So you are coping. But the roof is a worry?

Oh, I wouldn't say it's a worry to me but it needs doing but I look at it and think yes but then I turn a blind eye to that and I think, oh well it might last a bit longer.

So it's not leaking?

Oh no, no I haven't got any leaks, no loose iron or anything like that, the wind found that out the other night. Wasn't it terrible? It went all day.

A big tree fell on a house. It was on the front page of the paper. Did you see that?

Mmm.

So if the roof did leak, would that influence your decision to stay here?

No. I'd have it done.

You'd have it done. And you've got the money in the bank to have that done?

It'd be expensive though.

You wouldn't have to borrow?

No.

You're in a very fortunate position then. If you worked as a relief teacher, did you have superannuation from that?

No.

But you've saved?

Oh as much as you could. You couldn't save much on the wages back then.

Yes you said it was a struggle to establish the home and get the furniture.

But that's over a period of a long time my dear.

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 11

How long have you been living here?

Nearly 14 years?

And, where did you live before you moved here?

[Name of suburb deleted]. [Name deleted] *Street*.

And what led to your moving here?

Well my mother left me a house in [name of suburb deleted] and I sold that and moved here.

So you bought this house then? So is that when you moved into home ownership or did you own a home before then? So you sold ...

Oh well, you know we did own a place in [name of suburb deleted]. It was pretty much a run down shack, and then he left and then when Mum died, I got it.

And so your husband left.

Yes, and I'm much better off.

Yes, I think that's the case for a lot of women.

Yes [laughing].

So you own this house outright? But it's not the home ... you had children here?

Well I had seven, but there was only one that ever lived here.

Mmm, and what do you like about living here?

Oh the area, close to shops and most of the things I like to do.

So what sorts of things do you like to do?

Dance, Morris and Scottish Country, badminton, croquet and oh, I work in [name of charity shop deleted] at [name of suburb deleted] a couple of hours a week. Have I left out anything else?

So you're quite an active and busy person?

Yes.

So what don't you like about living here?

Oh the hill perhaps if I want to walk. [Laughing.] Yes.

I suppose it's hard, especially if you're carrying shopping.

Well, I've got a car now but the time will come when I won't.

So you think when there might be a time when you're older maybe, when you wouldn't be able to drive?

Yeah, mmm, and it might be a bit of a chore.

So when you moved in here, it must have been a pretty big thing to buy a solid house like this.

Oh yes, yes definitely.

So you must have had some expectations about what it was going to be like living here when you chose this house?

No, I don't know whether I did. It was something better than what I had.

And that has turned out?

Oh yes, yes. It's pretty easy; there's not a lot of work in it. It's sort of easy maintenance place. The first time I've had anything done to it was the painting last week, around the window ledges. But it's been really good.

It does seem very solid and it's nicely laid out. It'd be easy to move around here.

The thing that has been put on the back is the sunroom there. It's only got two bedrooms but that's really good.

It's got a big living area.

Well they can't land on me and think they're going to stop here [laughing].

With seven children that'd be highly likely.

[Laughing.] Yes, there's only two of them in Hobart.

I suppose you've got grand children as well?

Oh, great-grand children.

So how many of those have you got?

I've got fifteen grand children and two great grand children, another one on the way.

But only two live in Hobart. So where do the others live?

Perth, two in Perth; one in Adelaide and one in [name of town deleted].

That's six.

The eldest one died.

Was that as a child?

No, no, he was 31. A car came down on him.

Where was that?

Oh, he was living in [name of suburb deleted] at the time.

That must have been difficult.

Yes.

Did he have a family?

Yes, a couple [of children]. They moved to [name of town deleted], so I've only recently caught up with them again. But they were just about divorced when it happened. It was only a month or so to go.

So they weren't living together.

Oh no, and she got everything because it wasn't final [laughs] and most of it was her fault.

It turned out well for her.

Yeah. Yeah. She moved back to live with her mother.

So how often do you see your children or your grandchildren?

Oh, I see my son [name deleted]. He lives at [name of suburb deleted], I see him fairly regularly.

He helps me a lot with the car and does the lawns when he can get around to it and [daughter's name

deleted] *lives at [name of suburb deleted], but I don't see him [daughter's son] as much as I used to because he doesn't need the babysitting anymore like, because the youngest one's nine [laughs].*

Mmm, mmm, yeah, and what about your neighbours? What are they like?

Well, I say these have been real [indicating house to right] ... They don't let on to no English because of the dog [that barks]. But the one over opposite she's been marvellous and the old chap next door he's ninety and you should see the garden he's got. Oh, you know, he's nearly blind. So other than these you know [on the right] they're really good neighbours here. That's all I know though, the rest of them, so being so close to the corner I suppose. I've only barely spoken to the others over opposite on the other corner. But they work you know. They're not there that often.

So people here, they don't help each other much. There's not much of that?

No, not really.

And are you planning any major repairs or renovations to the house?

No, that was the main thing I wanted done was the ... because it's quite a big yard. I'd like to get rid of some of that lawn out the back but other than that, no. Well I haven't really got the money to do much.

So you're on a pension.

A little bit more than the pension I've got, but not much.

So you've got super or something?

No, no, it was just some money I put into an annuity. I get something every month.

So what was left from when you sold your mother's house?

Yes, yes. I got half of [the former matrimonial home].

So you and your husband divorced.

Not divorced but, no ...

So you divided your possessions up?

Yes.

Cos I think that a lot of women's housing careers and housing decisions and where they end up finally in their old age, it does come from what happened in their marriage doesn't it?

Mostly, yes, mmm.

But you were very lucky.

I was; that I was an only child ... [was lucky] in one respect, but in another respect you know, you've got nobody really.

At your age?

Yes, yes, the kids have got their own lives and you've sort of ... really I don't make friends that easily.

You don't have relatives your age?

No.

So you do feel isolated sometimes?

Sometimes; mostly you know I keep busy and enjoy what I do. No, that's all.

And you go to church?

Oh yes, yes, pretty well every day really.

What you're involvement with the church?

I just go nearly every day.

To church?

Yeah.

Is that what, to see people?

No.

Just to pray?

Yes, it's so handy. I wouldn't if it wasn't that close [laughs].

[Conversation deleted.]

So do you see people when you go there?

Oh yes, just to speak to though. They're not all that friendly really you know. What do you think they should be? But then again perhaps it's me you know. I'm not really ... I've never been very good at making friends. I mean, I seem to be in too much of a hurry [laughs].

It does take a lot of time to make friends doesn't it, just to, sort of talk to people and get to know them.

Yes, even when I was growing up there was only a couple that you know ...

Felt you had things, what, in common with?

Yes, yes.

You only had a couple of really good friends.

Mmm.

And what's happened to them?

Oh one of them really ... [name deleted], she married somebody in the Army and went here there and everywhere in Australia. She died a couple of years ago. That was the main friend. And another one I only heard from her, she used to send a birthday card and I didn't even realise she'd passed on too, so.

They've both gone.

Yeah, so in a way being an only child's got its limitations [laughs].

Yeah but people with brothers and sisters, they don't always ... like each other

No, no, I know. My lot! I know.

So your kids aren't close to each other?

No.

Kids can be so different.

Oh yes.

And they can take very different paths in life.

Mmm.

So are all your children working?

Yes, yes.

Well that's good. They're pretty successful then. It's getting harder and harder for people to get into work.

Yes, the youngest one had to go to Perth to. He's had a job ever since he was over there. He's a butcher.

It seems to be the way now in Tasmania that if people want to get a job and if they can't get one here, that they have to go to the mainland.

Yes, he started off here and then went. He thought he'd try the navy but that didn't work out so when he come out of that he went to Perth. Of course [name deleted] was there so, his sister.

So he's close to her then?

No, not all the time [laughing] but they're reasonably good now. As long as they don't see too much of each other ...

Huh, yeah being too close can be a problem.

Although she's the eldest now and he's the youngest, so ...

So did she used to look after him a bit when he was little?

Oh a bit, but she was nearly always off somewhere else. I mean she was about 16 I think when he was born.

So your house is pretty well right.

Oh yes.

You're comfortable here.

Mmm.

But there might be an issue with the hill or the stairs at the front too?

Oh well I can go to the back. I don't really have to use the stairs.

So you don't have to use the stairs.

Well mostly I do [go to the back] because of the car.

Oh, so you come in through the back.

Yeah.

Oh, so you drive the car around the back?

Oh yes.

That's very convenient.

Oh it's quite ... It's a big area. You can turn. Turn a truck there.

Perhaps you could show me before I go.

Yeah. It's [the yard] too much really, too much.

And, what about your car? Because you've got this money invested and a small annuity, if you need to get a new car you could get a new car too?

Oh, well [name deleted] would be pretty good with that too.

This is one of your sons?

This is the one that does more for me. He looks after the car.

So is it an old one?

Eighty-five, '86, but it's not had a lot of use because I don't drive very far.

So what sort of car is it?

Toyota Corona.

They're good cars.

Yes, he thought it would be better one like that rather than these electronic gadgeted things that he couldn't cope with. Yeah. That he could fix, yeah.

So how far do you drive?

Richmond's about as far as I'd go.

And what would take you there?

Well often on May Day we used to go to Richmond to dance. So apart from that ... But we didn't do it this year. When it's on in, if it's in the middle of the week, May Day, we sort of don't do as much. We've got to choose which weekend to do it and so forth.

So how long have you been doing Morris dancing?

Fifteen years. Since they started here actually.

So you were already doing that before you moved to this house?

Just, yes, yes, yes. We went to Adult Ed. They sent a dancer and a musician out from England and they stayed for 12 months, and they got the side going.

So I've been aware of that. I suppose I've been to functions where there's been Morris dancing and folk dancing. I think that's a really good thing.

Well you don't need a partner with that and the Scottish country you don't need partners and that's really good and yet you can't get that many people to do it. And I don't know why because it's good exercise and good fun, you know, mixing and so forth but, numbers are down with Morris at the moment so, and with the Scottish really and they've been advertising every week I've noticed.

You know I've had a friend who's done quite a bit of dancing but he's not been doing it of late and I think he was very fit and healthy while he was doing it. It's a great thing for your health. It's probably the sort of thing I need to do myself.

Yeah well that's what I think: I'll keep going as long as I can.

Mmm. So your health is good. I mean I don't know how old you are.

73, nearly.

But those are the sort of things that make a difference.

Mmm, well I think so but try and talk other people into doing it [laughs].

When people are older it can be very difficult.

Oh yeah, well I was nearly 60 when I started [laughs].

It's not too late for me then.

No [laughing]. *Oh, although I was doing the Scottish before that but I used to do the Irish as well cos the kids were.*

[Conversation deleted.]

They moved to Riverdance rather than just a soft shoe. Well I don't like Riverdance. I don't like the hard shoe. Yeah.

I suppose you don't get to know everyone's name.

Well it's so long since I've done the Irish because when they moved to the Tuesday night, well; and Morris is a lot cheaper too. I mean it's only six dollars a month, whereas it was four dollars a night for the other one.

It seems like fun, Morris dancing.

Yes, it is really and yet you can't get people to go. It's the best thing out. You know, I've found, you know; the people really seem to take an interest in you, which none of the other things ...

Well there's something about it I mean, you're doing something together where you don't have to talk and I suppose all ages can do it but there's something that must bring people closer together somehow.

Well I think it is. They seem to be a very close-knit group. They seem to all sort of look after each other and really caring, which I haven't with most other things.

That's one way of building; I don't know what you call it but building connections with people. So there are all ages? There's young people too?

Yeah, well not so many young people, no.

So what would be the ages then?

Oh forties and fifties I suppose, mostly. Oh [name deleted]'d be in her thirties. There's a couple [gets photos]. That's when the Tall Ships were in and they asked us to go and dance on the ship and that was, oh ...

So this is you?

Yeah, the best night out!

I love the outfits they use.

Oh well I haven't got my dresses in the ... See that's only the trousers too that one. That was at Richmond. That was May Day and these were a family from England.

And they knew it?

Yes. The kids danced with their parents. Have you seen the dress?

I think I would've because I've seen some Morris dancing. I wonder if young people would be involved more

Yeah you'd think they might. [Brings out dress to show.]

This is the thing that people in cohousing told me; when they live together as a group that various rituals become important for the group.

[Looking at photos.]) *That's at Evandale, the penny-farthing [race].*

You go to Evandale?

Yes, we go up there every year.

You have family photos there too.

That was a good one. That was on top of the mountain.

When was this?

Uh, that's year before last. That's uh, my grand daughter's travelling at the moment, so I've had a few ... now where's this one? Oh yeah.

I might have a look at them later.

Yeah. Yes. Yeah.

And so you're not planning to sell then?

No, that's the only thing I think of, maybe, but I like it here and the view and th ...

So it's only the hill really.

Yeah and it's easy, while I can look after myself, yeah.

So it's amazing people do tend to think about ... the future, when they're getting older.

Oh well yes, you've got to, haven't you.

It's sensible to.

Mmm.

Yeah, if you're settled where you are, why move unless you have to. Is that how you feel about it?

Yes. Yes.

You have absolutely no reason to move. You've got no issues here.

No. [Dog barks.] *There's a dog I could strangle. Some afternoons I have to go out because I can't stand it.*

It's sad. It's probably a very nice dog.

Yes, yes. *But they just ignore it. The only time it gets out that gate is when they leave the gate open and that's fairly frequently.*

And the dog escapes ... So you don't think of the prospect of moving to a retirement unit?

Well I don't think I could afford it, no, from what I've heard.

So it's costly! Do you know how much it would cost?

Well from what I've seen it's quite expensive isn't and then you sort of, I thought, I always assumed that you had people there that would see to you but it's not always the case is it? I know with [name of retirement village deleted] you're sort of more or less in your own unit and you look after yourself.

Yeah, so that would be a reason for you to move there, if you had help on site?

Mmm, yes, yes; somebody to rely on, because I don't know whether I could rely on my daughter to do anything to be truthful about it. Although she's a nurse and she's just gone and got a, what do you call it, a two year nursing course. A registered nurse isn't it. Yeah.

So she works full time does she?

Pretty well, yes.

And she's got children?

Mmm, four.

Are they young?

That's what I said. [Name deleted]'s the youngest and then there's ...

How old's [the youngest]?

Nine.

Oh yes, that's the one, the one you used to mind him.

Yeah, and [name deleted]'s twenty-one. [Name deleted]'s nineteen and [name deleted]'s fifteen.

And what's your daughter's name?

[Name deleted.]

I suppose it is different. So how old's she?

Forty-two. Sixty-one she was born, so nearly 42.

So life is a lot more complicated for young people these days.

Mmm.

It's more expected and necessary for the women to work. If you've got a lot of children it's a very hard life isn't it. So did you work? Or like a lot of women in your generation their career was homemaker.

Mmm, I had a lot of help from my mother.

With all your children?

Mmm, because I was the only one, she had to.

She must have enjoyed having all the grand children after having only one child.

Oh I don't know [laughs]. Another one she wasn't too happy about every time we told her. She kept thinking did I do it on purpose for her.

Was it because of being a Roman Catholic?

No. No.

Was it because you wanted children, because ...

No. I didn't particularly want more than four.

So the others weren't planned.

No. They weren't planned.

It's amazing that you had seven that way.

Yes.

So you must have started fairly young.

No, no, about 23 I think when I had my first one, which is not young compared to some of these grand children of mine [laughs].

So most of your children started their families fairly young?

Yeah, yes. [Daughter's name deleted] had one before she was married when she was 16. That's the one who was travelling, so those photos, and of course she was home too with the rest of them at the time.

So you had eight.

Yes.

And your husband was there too.

Oh yeah, you could say so.

It doesn't sound like he was much use.

He was not. No sometimes he went to Queensland three times a week.

Was that for work?

Yeah, truck driver, and drank.

It's a worker's lifestyle isn't it, an Australian worker.

Well [son's name deleted] does the same thing but not long distance.

What, he does, drive trucks?

Yes.

And he drinks?

No, [name deleted] doesn't drink much. No. He wouldn't dare I don't think.

And so we were talking about retirement units weren't we; about whether you could afford them and the advantages. So I suppose the sort of help you're talking about is meals or help with housework if it got too much.

Mmm, yes. I'm not good on the housework I'm afraid, even now.

Well it looks like you've got it organised so you can keep it clean and tidy without too much effort.

Oh, I'm untidy I really am.

Well this doesn't look too untidy.

Ah, just the papers usually.

Yeah I find it easy to get the lounge room untidy, especially with books.

Oh yes I love books.

So you go to the library.

Oh yes.

So where's the closest one.

Oh [name of suburb deleted] *but I find I've got more of a choice going there. I don't go into town that often.*

So do you know anyone in a retirement village?

No not now, no.

So the only thing that's likely to change about your housing is, and if you're looking after your health, it might never happen. As long as you can manage the bill, I mean you can always get groceries delivered.

Oh yes you can.

So you are in a very secure and comfortable position aren't you?

I think so.

And do you find because you've got that small annuity you can manage reasonably well and can do all the things you need to do?

Yes.

You don't have to go without.

Oh you do. Oh it was a big drag painting.

So you had to save for that?

No, no, but it was nearly nine hundred dollars though.

That's not too bad.

That's not too bad. It was nearly three days work.

And you've got a brick house.

Yes if I didn't have it. My mother's house was Huon pine. A doctor bought it. A doctor [name deleted] and they put a back on it. It was very run down and the toilet was outside and the washhouse was pretty [sighs] ordinary I should say ...

So I'll try and get you to talk about something else. So what you look like, you have a future of growing older here and I suppose you must think as you go about your every day about what that means to you and what this house means to you.

No, not really.

It sounds as though you're happy with it.

Yeah, reasonably.

There must be things you could do here to make it easier for you to do things. Do you have interests at home?

Not a lot; a bit of sewing and so forth like fancy work but nobody seems to use it all that much now do they?

I think it's becoming valuable now because there's less handcrafts around.

Mmm. Crossword puzzles and things like that, doing those.

But you go out.

Usually only Thursday I don't have something to do so I've been looking in the Adult Ed [laughs].

So you take courses?

Oh yeah. I did two last year. The yoga, I really enjoyed that. I did two terms of that and I tried the computer but, no, it hurt my eyes too much and I really couldn't concentrate on it.

I wonder if the screen had a radiation shield on it. Or did you just find the bright light...

Oh yes. It was at [name of suburb deleted] where they do the computers. Oh there's a direct light over it and oh, gee... really, really uncomfortable. I found out where my daughter-in-law was where the light was back further that was better. No she didn't have the light directly over it; it was coming from back in the room.

So it was not glare from the screen.

Oh, really and of course I've got a cataract coming so I suppose that didn't help things. But I thought I'd better try it and see if I can understand it. But I said there's more to it than realised.

I find now, I suppose you do get to understand it and get used to it, but they're so user friendly these days you don't need to understand how it works in order to use it.

[Laughs.] *Well perhaps they didn't do it very well. Perhaps they were just thick. I don't know [laughs]. But he's been doing it for a long time*

I think in those courses they go into a lot of detail

And give you things you don't really need

And really it's something you learn by doing.

Of course I went out and [grand daughter's name deleted] helped me with the homework. Sour cream scones; they're quite nice I mean I tried the recipe but really she did it so well; all these little bits and pieces; different colours, oh. But they grow up with it so I suppose it's no problem.

Home ownership puts you in a very strong position doesn't it? This house would be worth a reasonable amount. It gives you options.

Unless it's gone up a lot since I bought it. Still if you sell it you've still got to buy something else, don't you?

Yeah I think a lot of people are in that boat. Some things about people's houses may not be ideal but when you think about all the inconvenience and cost of moving

Moving, yeah.

And when you think of what the options are. One of the dreams I have is if people aren't happy and really need to move and didn't have enough, to get into one of these up market retirement units, people could get together and pool their asset and using affordable building methods make savings doing it as one project

Yes, I think with the cohousing it was reasonably cheap. They built that very cheaply.

They were lucky though. Some people do think it's essential to the housing. If what your need is, is housing you don't have to have a common meeting room. It's the area of growth now, seniors only cohousing. They don't do their common meal. It's just about universal that they don't do the common meal.

Probably what you like wouldn't be what other people like. I can't understand how it works really. I thought it had to be vegetarian. I think cohousing co-op have a lot of vegetarian meals.

No you don't have to be anything. [Pause.] What does being a homeowner mean to you?

Just security.

That means you know you can stay here as long as you want.

Mmm, I can't think of anything else.

And you have control over what you do here.

Mmm.

How old's the house?

I don't know, I think it comes from the fifties. I think they were originally government houses.

So did you get advice from a builder?

No, not really.

I think you've shown excellent judgement.

He usually cuts that for me.

[Your son] does?

It went up and belted me on the nose. After that he's been doing it.

But do you think of getting hydro heat?

There are a couple of those wall heater things here but they're in such a stupid place so they're useless really. I've got another small heater.

But that would be very costly.

I suppose that might be quite difficult to do in a place like this too. It doesn't have to go under the floor too. That's the problem in winter. It gets damn cold.

So if you got some money you'd think of what else you could do

I've got to bring the wood in myself.

How do you carry it with a wheelbarrow?

No three bits at a time. I suppose [name of suburb deleted] can get quite cold.

Where I live, I'm not down in the valley. It's not too bad. It can get cold anywhere in Hobart. The cost of the firewood. I've been busy and I haven't felt up to it. I've never stretched to buying it.

Well [son's name deleted] does, reasonably, \$65 [a tonne for firewood].

How many tonnes do you use in a winter?

Probably only a couple. I wish the ruddy birds wouldn't come down the chimney.

So it comes down here?

And you can hear them. They usually don't do it in the winter, but they can be quite a nuisance, trying to catch them.

I like this china cabinet.

That's old.

Did it belong to your mother?

No actually that's my husband's. He carted some furniture for them and they didn't have the money to pay him, so they gave him that. Yes, yes, yes, even all the cups are there, twenty-first birthday present, and they've hardly even been used.

People have mugs now.

And you don't get much either in those cups.

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 12

How long have you lived her?

54 years.

In this house?

No, not in the house, in Australia.

In Australia, for 54 years?

Yes.

So how long have you lived in this house?

In this house I've lived 20 years.

And can you tell me about where you lived before you moved here?

[Name deleted] *Avenue; opposite this house, in [name deleted] Avenue.*

And so you built this house, you and your husband?

No, we bought it. We sold ours and bought this.

Oh. It's a very nice house. It's quite big. How many bedrooms does it have?

Three.

Three.

Downstairs is four, four bedroom.

And so your children ...

All married. All stay out.

So they've not lived in this house?

No.

So you've bought this for your retirement.

With the husband; the children were with us but little time they were gone. They married and gone.

Yes but they live nearby somewhere.

Yes they live close to me.

But only one of them has children.

Everyone has. I have five grandchildren.

Oh five, you have two children and five grandchildren.

Yes.

That's pretty good.

I have three children, two boys, one girl and five grandchildren.

And what do you like about living here?

Ah, I love very much especially Australia and Tasmania, that's my best home what I can get. Adopted me very good, not just me, with a husband and all together. I come here single with husband so there no children, children come later, all born in Australia.

And so can you tell me about your first house when you came here. Did you buy a house or did you rent first?

No, big story dear; I come here to live in Brighton Army Camp, within two weeks I go to work and I work in mothercraft home and I earn three pounds ten per week and I save the money and we bought a block of land and put the caravan on the land and we go and live in it, in caravan. Within time we build a chalet, two bedrooms and a kitchen. Then did in one year, 1950, my first girl come and I work before say mothercraft home, after jam factory, after little restaurant and then I stay home and have a baby.

You had your daughter and then you had the others after that and you stayed home and looked after them. And so your husband must have had a reasonable job to be able to support you?

He work in [Name deleted] Council and after when we, we did in Brighton, he did in Hobart this time, after I save a little bit of money and he save and we put it together and what else and he, we come to the chalet, built the chalet and live in the chalet in time we had the baby and what else; and through five years we build the house, not three because there was no money. That's ...

So what did you build? Did you build a three-bedroom house?

Three bedroom; five-room house.

Was that a weatherboard house or brick?

Brick; [Name deleted] Avenue opposite, you can see it.

You mean out the back here? And did you get much help when you were building the house, from friends and people you knew?

We had, own friends to help. Oh, five six boys every weekend.

So your husband's friends?

Yeah.

It's a big thing to build a house isn't it? So your husband was working full time and could only work on it part time.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

And so mostly he did it on weekends?

After he work in [deleted] factory, then he work in the [Name deleted] 33 years straight and I work after my children and the children grown up had five years old, my twins, then I had work 23 years straight in hospital.

[Conversation deleted.]

Good there. I retire in sixties. When I was 60 I retire.

And how old are you now?

Eighty soon.

Eighty what?

Seventy-nine.

So you bought this house when you retired?

Yes, we sold the other one.

Yeah, so if you hadn't worked hard all those years you wouldn't have been able to afford a house like this?

Ah maybe yes, maybe no. I don't know.

And what do you like about living here?

I guess, especially now, I'm a bit lonely maybe.

So you don't like being lonely. So how long has your husband been passed away?

Five years.

So it's not very long ago. You find it lonely here?

Yes, sometimes children come and they stay here, sleep here and go.

Do they live very far away?

No, [name of suburb deleted], [name of suburb deleted] and [name of suburb deleted]; all round here.

That's all quite close. So they all have their own homes?

Yes. I worked hard and help them, and with the five kids I done the cooking washing everything done and going to work and come home and do it again, every day works.

So how old are your children now?

Oh 53, 48, 'cos they're twins.

There must be some good things about living here in this house or do you find you have trouble?

No. They never lived here in this house. They was already own home.

As you've got older do you find that the stairs at the front are a bit difficult to manage or the stairs at the back?

No.

Not at the back?

No stairs, no.

So you can manage here all right. So you don't need to go out the front, you can go out the back. You can come round can you?

Oh yeah.

Because that's one of the things that could get to be a problem as you get older. And you've got enough room here. You like the space you've got?

Plenty room but I can't much say rent it or some because if I had only pension if I rent it well they get maybe get extra more money and I get pension cut off somehow.

So you can't rent it?

Can't rent it.

That's a shame somehow isn't it? People would probably like to rent out some rooms and it would probably help solve the housing problem.

Yeah. Nice place downstairs and upstairs.

And so what is it you don't like about living here?

Ah, I love it. I love it. I love it, only I'm getting older.

So have you got a favourite place, like this room at the back it looks pretty sunny?

If you like you can come and have a look.

Perhaps we'll have a look later. I'd like to have a look when we've finished. And so when you first moved in here that must have been like a realisation of a dream to buy a nice house like this. You must have been excited about that.

We live in [name deleted] Avenue. We sold it. We live in [name of suburb deleted]. We bought a brand new house and it was not really comfortable for us. I didn't like it much down there. And what else ...and the rain it come and plenty water under the house and we sold it and bought in the same area where we come from.

So you've been in a few houses and you just like to be in this area.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

So you must know quite a few people around here?

Yeah, yeah.

So you know your neighbours quite well?

Oh yeah I know the neighbours, always we come together even in one boat, nearly all gone now, one by one you see.

Mmm, and these are people who lived here all the time you were here?

Yeah, they was all the time here and built here. They go to Queensland and we bought it from them. They go to Queensland and they have three boys and they had a job there, so we bought here.

So you actually knew the people who owned the house?

Yeah, yeah.

So how different is this, living here? You knew what to expect because you knew the area, so you knew what it would be like living here before you moved in. And so things about this house are pretty good?

Ah, we are here so many years when I come young, I know all areas, all everywhere you see because ...

So mmm, so you're very settled here in this house and in this area and so you feel really at home here?

Oh yeah.

Very familiar; can you tell me something about your neighbours here then?

Neighbours was here, neighbours oh, was down, oh say 20 years and they sold it before Christmas and they come new people.

Next door?

Next door, and then up top they people live, oh I know them say 15 years. And this next door I know people from the beginning when I come here, they was already there.

And they're still there?

Yeah, yeah.

So these ones they've both moved. So it's not that they've died they've just moved.

Moved.

Moved to the mainland?

No, no, no. They move to other place [name of suburb deleted] way.

So do you still see them?

Sometimes yeah. Oh I live very good with the neighbours. No trouble. Love me I love them.

So do you visit each other's places?

Oh not really. I never live in them pocket. They never live in my pocket. We always say hullo, hullo, good morning and, and if I need something well they bring me, milk bring me, anything bring me my groceries if I need, give them money and bring me because I couldn't walk, my feet wouldn't carry me and that's all right.

That's being a good neighbour.

Neighbours good yeah, very good. And there are new people come, a new girl with two kids and they're very good too.

Mmm, well that is good and I didn't know you had a problem with your feet.

Mmm.

So what's the problem?

Ah well, the problem I had, getting sort of numb so [takes off shoes and shows her feet].

That's on your toes and your fingers. So that makes it hard for you to walk?

Yeah, ah walk very hard, that's why I never go much anywhere.

So do you need a walking stick? So you have a walking stick?

No, no so far, but night time when I get up I have a walking stick because by myself maybe I fell and go down.

So you've got to be very careful?

Yes.

Do you go to church on Sundays?

Oh, sometime yeah but not often. I never got a car. I didn't want to bother any of the kids or neighbours or something or taxis they cost me money and see when you have only one pension you can't throw it away so much.

So you wouldn't mind going to church but because of transport you don't get there?

Yeah, yeah, I go often but not that often.

When you go, how do you get there? Does someone come and pick you up?

Yes someone comes and picks me up, yeah, my kids or somebody. I have plenty help from [name deleted] Council they come and a man now cut the grass for me beautiful and anything I need, well I ring them up and they come and do it for me.

Around the yard and the house?

Mmm.

And so how about shopping, how do you manage that?

The lady come two hours a week from [name deleted] Council and she helps me do the shopping, do the housework little bit.

What does she take you? Do you go shopping with her?

Yeah.

Does she drive you there?

Yeah, that's what I have, help and god thanks for the Council. I'm very proud for them.

So you can go and choose what you want and then if you just need something like milk or something the neighbours will get it for you?

Yeah, mmm, sometimes I'm not healthy, sometimes anything, something happen or something well, the girl go herself or the neighbour brings it up. Oh yes.

But you don't get much help from your children?

Oh children have their own uh, own work, own lives and I couldn't bother so much kids. Daughter help me little bit but, she herself not healthy you see.

Oh. So which one's your daughter?

The eldest.

And are her children pretty well grown up now?

Yeah, yeah, they have.

But she works?

She works part-time only, two days a week or so.

And she's with her husband? She looks after the house.

Yeah, husband is retired already; he was school teacher you see. She has two kids to look after and see they are both in uni.

They're both at uni?

Mmm.

So they've not left home yet?

No.

That'd be quite a bit of work. Are you planning to make any changes to your housing here in the future?

In case I go to nursing home? Yeah [if] I couldn't manage myself then must, must do something.

So that would be your next step, so you'd probably sell the house then?

Yeah, yeah.

But only if you couldn't manage here anymore?

If I couldn't manage.

Are you thinking of making any major repairs or alterations to make it easier for you to be here?

Oh, I done it so much, how much I can but now it's, I couldn't manage anymore because I, you know, I live economically more, all right but ...

You have to be very careful?

Yeah.

So for you to go to a nursing home, I mean how do you feel about going to a nursing home?

You probably wouldn't want to do that if you could possibly not do it?

Mmm, if I must I go. If I couldn't manage somehow home. I stay home.

You wouldn't think about living with one of your children?

No.

Do they ever talk about that?

Yes, we talk together.

And so what do they think about that?

They are, you see I had daughter is not healthy now to look after me and boys is boys and girls is very nice and very good to me, boys wives, daughters-in-laws but mmm, I can't.

You're not so close to them?

Oh no, oh no. They're all right but they have their own troubles, they have their own, their own life you see and I wouldn't want that for anyone. They should live happily with themselves.

So what would your daughter think about if you went in to a nursing home? Would she feel bad about that?

No, no, no. We talk about it. She said I couldn't look after you. She had an operation [indicating her breast].

A mastectomy?

Yes that breast.

So she's got limited use of her arms?

Mmm and she couldn't you see. I couldn't her trouble. Husband die from cancer. She had that trouble too and I couldn't.

So her husband's dead?

No, no my husband.

Oh so your husband died of cancer and she had that trouble too?

Yeah, you see.

So you must have had some thoughts about what it would be like living in a nursing home.
Have you been? Do you ...

When I work there I used to go in there to [name of nursing home deleted] every Sunday visiting people look after me and my daughter always do once a month, she does a cup of tea for elderly people you bring in, and she goes there in [name of nursing home deleted].

What does she do with them?

A cup of tea and gets social together you see, and yeah, once a month. And I see everything. I used to work with the people, you know so long before first people and after second people and I uh, I get used to everything.

So you feel you know what it's like and you know that people get good care there?

Yeah.

And you know can have social relationships and social activities?

Yes, and if I was to stay in hospital, in [name deleted] Hospital was very good to me, was very gentle to me, and everything. If you behave all right, they treat you the same.

Mmm, mmm, so what were you in hospital for?

Ah, I had pneumonia a couple of days, a couple of times. So they just admit me a long time ago, say 25 years ago.

And can you think of any ways your housing situation here might be improved or do you think this is comfortable and just pretty well as you like it?

If, I never do anything because if maybe one day I try to sell, everyone love their own taste and her own taste and improve it. And for me I haven't got the money to do now everything. Should be done lot of things but ... Should be done painting, should be done carpeting, should be done everything. Everything getting older, but, but it can do.

Well you have a good lounge.

When I buy this sofa I manage to live somehow how I am.

You have a lot of beautiful photos of your grandchildren and children. So what do you do during the day?

Sometimes I go out, with the older people mostly.

What is it?

Mostly to Hobart; they come and pick me up and bring me home. And next time I do, sometimes I do reading and television looking and radio listen and something do a little bit of sewing and a little bit of washing and take care of the house.

Yeah, that's enough to keep you busy I'm sure. So you don't think of selling and getting a smaller place that would be easier to look after?

No, no, no. Not so. I feel comfortable here. I'm used to it here.

Do you know what your house is worth?

I don't know.

It's a better than average house for this area so it must be worth more than an average house price around this area?

I never try to sell, you see. I don't know.

So this is the place you want to grow older?

I think it's happened [laughs].

It sounds like because you know this area so well, comfortable in this house, know so many people here and, do you have visitors to here?

Oh I have visitors sometimes mm, say, from Melbourne, priests, nuns sometime.

Come and stay here?

Stay with me and my friends also, they come visit me and go.

So these are friends you've had a long time? You had your children together and that sort of thing?

Yeah, I have still friends like that but we come together, even we in the one boat.

Even though you're older and living on the pension?

Yeah, when we come we say in the one boat, we come all young and maybe some with families, some single like me and now growing old.

So it must be pretty nice to have found that in the one place with some people you've known all that time?

And once with husband three months in Canada for holiday that's all what I did.

And did you have family there to visit?

My husband had family, a hundred people in his family, there was a family reunion and we used to go. They invited us to go to Canada and spent three months there.

[Conversation about Canada deleted.]

So do you find now that you're older, do you find that people treat you differently?

Here?

Yeah. Do you find that people treat you differently now that you're older?

Not really.

So you still feel like the same person.

Yeah.

So some people have said to me when they go to hospital or something that people tend to talk to them as though they're not very smart. Because they're older they assume they've lost their marbles.

Mmm, so far I don't know. Maybe somebody else can realise how I am but for me so, I feel I am the same only forgettable a little bit now. It is not the same memory it used to be.

That usually happens a little bit.

You understand.

Is this photo of you?

Yes.

Oh you were very pretty. And is this your wedding photo or is this your parents?

That is my wedding photo.

[Checking the photo.] It is, yeah.

And that's my daughter.

Oh that's your daughter and this when you came, and so your daughter's very pretty. I suppose you must be pleased that you came out here and you were able to give your children an opportunity of a good life?

Ah I used to love it, I used to love it and they treat us all right. I didn't know ways, any, how that called, called in Hobart. I didn't know where police live. I didn't talk anything with police. I never got into any trouble. My husband had a little bit accident here on the road. He had something trouble with insurance or something but they pay him and after it's all right.

Your husband's fault?

Not my husband's fault; somebody else's fault, and I never been this time in trouble.

And do you drive yourself?

No.

You've never driven. So you've always got around by bus to travel or your husband drove you?

Yes, my husband drive. Kids was here. Daughter was up to 23 years with me and boys was up to 27 years with us. Never go any uni, anywhere, savings.

So you looked after them. Well they were lucky weren't they?

Yeah.

I suppose it was too good for them to leave.

Yeah.

What sort of jobs have they got, your kids?

They was all office jobs.

So that was something that wasn't easy for you or your husband?

Some [deleted], all three.

[Comment deleted.]

[Deleted.] *Daughter she used to work a long time, sort of 15 years or more for [deleted], secretary she was.*

So that was a full time job?

Yeah.

So she's gone part time since she's had the problem?

Yeah, yeah.

So how did she manage with her children while she was having the operation and feeling unwell? Did you help her at all with that?

No, I help myself. I never got anybody but done myself. I work hard and done myself somehow. I never got any kind of sickness or something, say up to now I couldn't tell, I never got any sickness.

No problem with your heart or blood pressure?

Blood pressure, I take a tablet or say 15 years for blood pressure but I take every day normally and only one tablet a day.

So it's not so bad. Some people take more than that?

Yeah.

There are a lot of memories for you in this area too I suppose, but not...

You would be stay here a couple of days you never go all through them pictures in a couple of days.

You've got so many?

So many, that cupboard there, full up. Anybody. My husband used to love do the pictures and he used to say always ... umm

He would take the photos?

Mmm.

So do you take any yourself?

Oh I take it and he used to take it.

I suppose your kids would take some too.

Yeah.

They're beautiful children.

My daughter she been twice, say once Miss [deleted] after she be again Miss [deleted].

Oh 'cos she's so pretty?

Oh yes, ten girls, so she had a chance to do [laughs]. Yeah.

Your house seems very comfortable and it seems like very clean and tidy and easy to look after. Isn't it?

[Laughs.] I don't know if it's clean and tidy or not.

So quite a nice view with the doors open.

Yeah.

And so some of the women I've talked to have wanted help and haven't been able to get it. Some have said they've gone to the Council again and again and haven't been able to get the help.

Uh, they told me uh when I was, I was in hospital this time and my husband was in hospital and that's why. See come home, was hard to, I had an operation for hernia, and then I couldn't lifting anything or and so [deleted] Council came and get help and say you are deserved, you work so many years, you see for people and thus you deserve it and they give me so far and I keep so, because I am lonely see and so, mmm.

So you feel lonely a fair bit?

Mmm [with emotion].

Can you ring people to talk?

Oh yeah.

Does that help?

Oh sure that help [laughs].

I think we're probably close to the end of the tape and there's not so much else to talk about when you know you're settled here. I mean it's a bit sad though isn't that you're settled here and you are lonely, wouldn't it be good though if you could live here comfortably and then not be lonely. I mean, what do you think it would take for you not to be lonely. I suppose if you miss your husband you can't replace that can you?

No, no. Oh well I'm used to it. I tell myself how I must do it, I must live and now I must try my best what I can do.

Just keep going? Yeah.

That's it.

I suppose you're better off than a lot of people because you do have your three children around. And I suppose you don't see a lot of them.

They come every second Saturday or Sunday.

They all come together?

Yeah. Oh yeah.

And you have a meal?

Oh yeah. They love together. Oh yes.

You must look forward to that?

Oh sure.

Yeah. That must be wonderful for you. Not everybody has that.

Oh yes. Oh yes. They love me. I think I have the best family in the whole world.

And that's a credit to you too isn't it?

I try the best.

And you get back what you give.

Mmm.

But you're very lucky because a lot of people have to leave here for jobs. I suppose it's more with the people who are young now; like perhaps your grandchildren because of the employment situation, people leave the state.

Mmm. It's very, very hard now you see grandson he finish this year uni, well I don't know what, he get a job or not. Daughter 'nother one year going to uni, a sister; and the other three they are only sixteen well.

So all have children? Your daughter has three?

Daughter has two and son, one have two and one have one.

Mmm, I suppose the going out; you said you go out sometimes.

Yeah.

And you've got some friends there and

Oh yes. Oh yes.

So you must enjoy that a lot too.

Oh yes.

Yes. So it's lonely but it's not an unbearable situation.

No, no, no, no. You know I try the best.

You see your grandchildren. They all come? I suppose it must be lovely to have them here too.

Yeah. They come all together.

Yeah and you find out what they're doing?

Mmm. Very good they were, very good kids in school.

They work hard?

Work hard yes.

That's the model you gave them wasn't it, by working hard yourself.

Yes I think so.

But it doesn't always happen, especially not these days.

Mmm.

And the other two are all right but I've got one at home ...

Yeah, you can help him, how much you can. That's it.

So when you said you helped your kids, you actually helped them buy their houses?

Oh they, they bought their houses. We guarantee for them and they was good, paid off, mmm, we never got trouble that's one thing.

So you went guarantor for all your children?

Similar.

But they bought their houses at different times

Mmm.

So you didn't have to do it all at once?

Yeah. First one we give our house ah in [deleted] Avenue for this one who is in [name of suburb deleted], and the other twin he married same year and, we help him a little bit and I mean he bought his own house too and pay off.

Oh.

And they got the children straight away and up to two three years paid off. That's good.

That is, they actually bought your old house, one of your kids.

Mmm.

But now it's gone to someone else.

It was beautiful, but it was a bigger house than this one.

[Deleted.] Oh, it's a better house, the one you built.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, so you build with some more study rooms and bedrooms together.

[Deleted.]

[Tape turned off.]

Interviewee 13

How long have you lived here?

Ah, since 1988. July 1988 I moved in, so ...

So it's about 15 years.

Mmm, yeah ...

That's a fair time. And where did you live before you moved here?

Ah, I've always lived in [name of suburb deleted]. Well when I say always, always since we came to Australia. We came out to Tasmania, we came in 1964. Before that we lived in Melbourne and ...

Ah.

And I still lived in [deleted] Cres, [name of suburb deleted], which was ... just a couple of blocks away really.

So you lived ... once you moved here in 1964 you stayed in the same place?

Stayed in [name of suburb deleted] ...

Until you moved in 1988.

Yeah, yeah ...

And what led you to move here?

To move to Tasmania?

To move here?

My husband had died in 1984 and, since the house was far too big for us, because our family home, I had six children so the family home was big with four bedrooms and, a big amount of land and I couldn't manage it anymore and it was just deteriorating so, oh, but I didn't want to do anything too quickly after [name deleted] died. I sort of wanted to take time, and think about it first up. Yeah, but once the house started, and the garden started to deteriorate I thought, oh I'd look at a unit. Yeah.

And did you get advice about buying this place?

Only from family, yes.

So you looked around carefully?

I looked around. I wanted a view. I was still driving the car. I mean I'm still driving the car but the position of hills didn't worry me so much because I had the car and I could go when and if I wanted to, but there's also the bus, enough to here as well if I really had to I suppose, mmm.

So you did think about those things when you moved here?

Well yes, I thought about that and that if the time came when I, wasn't able to drive, yes there's a bus just outside the street here and there's another one in [name deleted] Street, which is only five minutes away.

So you chose this place as the place where you would see out your days.

Probably, yes. Yeah, I mean if anything happened and I, I got to the stage where it was, got to be difficult for me that might change my mind, if I couldn't drive or anything like that I might consider it then, moving to a flatter area.

But here you've got the level entrance at the back haven't you?

I've got a ramp at the back. Yes.

And this is two bedrooms I suppose?

A two-bedroom place, yes.

And you've got a bit of garden out the front?

Well I have but I can't do it anymore. I, I have had two hip reconstructions and a knee reconstruction. Well I've had one hip done twice and a knee reconstruction so and, there's a possibility that that might happen to the other knee and the other hip as well, so ...

Oh, you've had two on the one hip?

I've had two on the one hip, yeah, so I can't get down to do things like gardening really now, and I miss that because I really loved to garden but I have someone who comes in once a fortnight. A friend who is actually a fellow from the church, who just helps me out and keeps his eye on the garden and then the lawn that the tenant next door and I share, Jim's Mowing, they come about once a month or a month apart.

So is that on this side?

The two units are on the one block.

Oh so there's just two units?

Yes, only the two units on this block.

And where's the lawn? I didn't see it.

Ah, see there's lawn down there [indicates out the window].

Just a small amount.

Yeah, and there's lawn out the front of my place here as well and around the side so...

But do you have pain from your ... hip and knee?

I have pain from my back because the doctor told me my back's a mess in a way and he can't do anything about that, but not from the hip anymore and really not from the, not from the knee reconstruction. It feels different. You can actually feel the knee. I mean, you know the knee has got something ceramic or whatever it is in there. You know it's a different feel altogether but it certainly doesn't pain me anymore.

Yeah. So they were successful?

Yes, yes.

The operations?

Mmm.

And what do you like about living here?

I think the peace and quiet as much as anything; being down [the end of a cul-de-sac], even though there are a lot, or quite a few children come and go in from out the front.

I noticed.

Being in a cul-de-sac, and they are ... the others are Housing Department places, whereas these two aren't. The two on this block aren't.

And all the others are Housing?

The others are Housing Department; because I'm, I'm down the driveway I don't always notice the children that much, you know I don't sort of hear any noise from them. They kick the football out there

and they come down, and when it comes down the driveway they come and collect it but that's about all, you know.

Yeah. They were playing on the street as I came in.

Mmm, well being a cul-de-sac you see it's safe for them and that's good.

Yeah, yeah, it is good.

Mmm ...

So you don't have any, there's no big social problems in your area?

Well not really. I did for a while. When I first came I think because this was one of the last to be built in here, I had the children riding scooters and bikes down the driveway and, and it took me a while to convince them that it was private property and they were not to do that; not because I sort of wanted to be difficult about it but I looked at the site thinking if any one of them was hurt you know doing that, there really wasn't any way I could help them much you know, because I certainly couldn't get down to help them up or whatever else and it does come fairly sharp and then goes over a ridge there so that ...

That would have worried you?

Well yeah it would have worried me if they had continued it and it did take a while before they, they probably thought of me as that old witch down there though. I'd been a school teacher and I had six children so [laughs] I can cope with children.

[Laughs.]

I can usually get children to take notice of me. I mean I always think children take notice of you if you're firm enough.

Mmm.

They recognise you for, if you speak with authority and whatever so ...

Mmm.

And if someone comes over, particularly the children now, I haven't had any trouble with them.

So there's mostly the same sort of children here, you think? There's not been a lot of change over in who lives here?

Oh no. Oh no, there's been a lot of different people come and go in those, yes.

So some new children might come and try to come down here.

Oh yes, yes, the children there now are different from the ones two years back. Yeah. Most of them would have been recent in the last two years or three years, the ones that are living there now.

Mmm. [Pause.] So you've been enjoying the view, since you moved in.

Well I was. I used to enjoy it very much so but I've, I've rung the [name deleted] Council a couple of times because I, I would like the tops of the trees lopped because all of my view is getting cut out now by the trees on the outside of the fence but nobody is ... I mean they keep saying they'll send someone, or they'll send someone to have a look, but I think they send them and they have a look from the other side, you know from [name deleted] Crescent side which still means that they think everything is safe over there, or relatively safe.

So does this overlook a park?

No. There's a road goes along my back fence, it's really a strange arrangement. I can't understand why they did it. My back fence is, you can see where that is, now on the other side of that there's about a metre of dirt then there's a concrete wall and then there's a footpath and then there's the road. Well that metre of dirt, they just let anything grow in there you know with the result that all those she-oaks. I think you can see the she-oaks, that ...

I think I can see the she-oaks poking up here, mmm.

Yeah. So they're on the outside of the fence and then up here further there's cotoneasters, and I don't know what the other things are, but they are getting quite tall.

Mmm and they shouldn't be letting them grow in fact.

Well they have, the she-oaks are interfering with the fence because the fence has got a few broken palings and things like that on it, but I haven't managed yet to get them to come up.

If they get much bigger you'll be losing the sun.

Yeah, I won't have any view at all. I won't be able to see. As it is now I can't see from my front porch I can't see up to the mountain like I used to, so. I can still see the mountain from your ... from that seat but ... and a couple of the trees are next door and I have been going to say to [name deleted] you know, could they cut them back, but she really hasn't really got anyone to do it. She's pretty old.

So is that this here?

Yeah, she's been here as long as I have, so.

That's public housing there?

Yeah, mmm.

So do you think people think you're in public housing sometimes, because you're in with a whole lot of public housing units?

Well I suppose they do. I don't know, although see I'm not sure how, it's, it's really strange because the ones all over there get their lawns done and they get painted, so [name deleted] gets painted too and anything that, you know if the kids break down the fence or anything like that they come along and fix that.

Are they all older people?

No, [name deleted]'s older. That's the one next door and then there's the one on the other side of this unit. She's an older person too, but other than that, but the ones all along that side seem to be single units. They seem to be just people on their own.

Mmm, maybe they're one bedroom?

I would say they're only one bedroom too, yeah.

And did you know it was public housing when you first moved in?

No I didn't.

Mmm.

I may have thought twice about it if I'd known but this was privately built you know and when I came and saw it this one was finished and the one next door wasn't quite finished, so.

And I mean it looks like an ideal place.

Well yes. It, it, really ... It still is an ideal place really. I mean it's really peaceful here at night and I've been fortunate that nobody sort of interferes with me terribly much. I've had the car ... The car's been broken into once but I've been in the, what 15 years, 1 years now, 15 yeah. It's only happened the once that the car was broken into and the petrol was cleared, cleaned out but ...

[Conversation deleted.]

I suppose I'd have to say that the only time I really see people to wave to or talk to is when I go to the letterbox, otherwise, other than [name deleted]. The one next door to me is rented so people come and go in that [said quickly], but I do see a fair bit of them. [Name deleted] who lives next door and

[name deleted]. *They're the two older ones. [Name deleted] will wander down sometimes for a talk. [Name deleted] I seem to see down at the supermarket more than I ever see her next door. So you could say in a way that I don't have a lot to do with the, the neighbours round about. I tend to wave you know and they wave back if I'm going out.*

Mmm.

When I first came here I used to pick up anybody who was walking up the hill and at that time ... and that was mainly a family over there, the [name deleted]s, who used to live there ... and then it turned out that one of the boys was convicted of murder. So the family said to me, Mum that's enough of this picking up people, you know on the way up the hill, because you don't know who you're dealing with.

No.

So ... and I suppose when I first came here it wasn't quite as bad from that point of view as it is now, you know. I just used to feel for people, you know, walking up that [name deleted] Street hill so I'd to pull over and say, you know, do you want a lift up to the top, but, I'm afraid I don't do that anymore.

Mmm and do you feel lonely here then because?

No, because as my family and friends will tell you, I'm never home. I'm hardly ever home. My family live here, in this part of Tasmania. One lives in Blackman's Bay, and that'd be the furthestest away. But I've got two that live in [name of suburb deleted] and one that lives in [name of suburb deleted] so that they are about and calling in with grandchildren frequently, and then I'm very tied up with the church as well so ...

And there are two other children as well?

Two others? Yes. One's in Sydney. One lives in Sydney and well the other one, [name deleted], well she lives with me when she's here. She comes back about every Christmas. She works in [place and area of work deleted]. You know she's a qualified nursing sister so she works six to eight months up there and then she comes back down here to. We say she comes to you know regain some strength because it's pretty wearing and tiring up there.

And escape the heat too.

Yes but she likes the heat.

So you see her regularly then?

Yes. That bedroom's really hers. All the grandchildren will tell you that's [name deleted]'s bedroom. If they come to stay they're sleeping in [name deleted]'s bed. So ...

Mmm, so they come and stay as well?

Well they will. Yes, only occasionally because they're still fairly small. The eldest one is eight.

So you couldn't run around and pick them up or ...

No it'd be a bit taxing. Oh well I go down to my daughter's house and mind hers and I have done since what's her eldest one, five. She went back to work six months or so after the baby so ...

And you've been minding them?

I go down once a week. She works two days in the week. And once a week I go down and mind that one, the other little one who's there and is now four. I've minded her since she was a bairn. They're good. I mean, again they know Gran's voice I think.

You've got some authority?

Yeah, yeah.

Is there anything you don't like about living here, apart from the things you've said?

Not really I don't think I ...

Any problems with the house at all? Any maintenance issues?

I mean I have ... District Nursing comes once a fortnight and, that's an hour a fortnight I have from them.

Is that help with housework?

Yeah. Well it's mainly the, I mean I can manage a lot of things but it's the bath and shower and toilet defeat me, so ...

Cleaning them?

Yeah, yeah. So as long as the ...

So bending and that?

Yes well I can't get down. I had a fall and I just couldn't get up, so that's a problem for me.

When you were doing it?

No, no, just had a fall. Just before Christmas. And so now I've got an, an alarm mainly because the children were, the family were worried about me falling, so they wanted me to have the alarm just in case that happened again.

We've covered a lot haven't we? So you're not planning to make any changes to your housing in the future?

Not. Well I'm getting a new stove, but no, not in the house itself.

Oh, well what sort of stove are you getting?

Well this [indicating stove] it's a stupid stove. I'm sorry when I moved in that I didn't say that I wanted a different stove. It's quite hopeless. It was hopeless from the start, so I ...

So what are you getting?

Ah. It's Westinghouse I've got ordered. It should be here next week I think.

Are you going to have gas burners?

No, no.

They seem to be all the go now.

Mind you. Well yes, mind you I lived with gas all my, in Melbourne you see we had gas so I was really. I just didn't think of that. I can't fault electricity really.

Yeah. There's more worry with gas if it blows up or things don't go down the holes and running out of gas. But, so, so you say at this stage you're not planning to make any changes?

No.

So what is likely to influence if you were to make changes about where you lived?

Well, as I said I have this bad back and I have this bad ankle. If I got to the stage where I wasn't so mobile I'd probably have to look at something more level.

So what would you look at?

Oh well I'd look at something down on the flat.

So you'd look at something similar to this?

Probably a unit, yes. I suppose the only thing I have against units really is places to put things. You know one accumulates quite a lot of things over the time. For instance I make my own cards. Well all the paraphernalia that goes with that is behind that chair over there. And ... but I suppose in a unit you've only got, there's a linen cupboard but it's only big enough for linen. You know like it's ...

No extra storage?

No, no extra storage.

No extra room anywhere.

No, so.

That's a nice thing to do. Someone at work was doing that recently, making Christmas cards already using the insides of envelopes in different colours and patterns and making Christmas trees on the cards out of them, cut out with gold edging. It was really pretty.

Ooh! Well I have all my friends who collect their cards for me and I cut out the templates. Yeah and use the templates but I've done that for about ten years or so.

So I'm not sure. So you actually use the card?

No I get cardboard. [Getting it out.]

So this is part of it.

I put it out because, you see what I mean I cut the template out from the card and then I get cardboard from ...

Oh that's a nice one. Yeah.

Officeworks, and out of one piece of cardboard you can get about nine cards.

Oh that looks nice. And do you sell these?

No I only use them for myself and the family know that I've got them, and ...

They'd be good for fundraising.

Oh well, yeah if somebody needs, if somebody's having a fundraising thing you know I usually put some cards in envelopes for them. The envelopes tend to be the dearest thing.

Oh yeah.

But then I've got friends who also now don't write on the envelopes.

And save them?

And save the envelopes for me if need be you see.

They're lovely. Yeah so you can almost tailor them to what you like, if you have something nice to put inside.

Oh yes I do that as well you see, yeah. When I originally did it I used to use lace and ribbon as well but now I have all these grandchildren it's no good. I mean they're just happy with the teddy bears and whatever else on it, but it's the card that matters.

And they know it's a special one that Nanny made.

Yes, yeah. Oh well, they tend to do it with me. They want to know can we make cards today or something so.

So you don't really think of going to a retirement unit, like with a group of other older people.

Well I haven't, I haven't sort of really thought of that. I think if I couldn't cope on my own I would tend rather to look at a flat attached to one of my children's homes. You know that rather than, although as I said to them, with six of them they could have me for two months of the year each and then they wouldn't notice anything. It wouldn't be too much on any of them would it [laughs].

So you have talked to them about it?

Just as a joke. Well I suppose in a way I've sort of spoken to them about it because I have this concern that [name deleted], the one who comes here who's the qualified nurse, she's not married and I don't think it's fair that she should be left to look after me.

Is she the youngest?

Oh no. She's the second eldest actually.

But by default that often happens because the others are focussing on their children.

Yes because the others have got their ...

They have their children and the grandchildren.

Yes. They've got lives while she's sort of, they would consider her free and yes, so I wouldn't like that. I would rather look at a separate flat that's part of someone's home but completely separate from the home itself you know so, but I haven't talked to anyone about that. My youngest daughter I think would look at that.

Is that the one who's children you mind?

That's the one whose children I mind; yes, she's the youngest in the family so, mmm.

And so is that possible at the place where she lives?

No, not at the place she's got no, but they're sort of thinking of building another one eventually.

Mmm, yes my daughter always tells me that. She says I want you to come and live with me but it doesn't always work out does it?

Well no, it doesn't. I wouldn't like to be actually living, I wouldn't like to go and live in a home with any of them. If I got to that stage I think I would prefer to go into a home. Is that too hot for you?

No. I've got my jacket off so I'm fine. Yes so you wouldn't want to have meals with them or only if it was like once a week or something like that.

Oh no, no. I don't think that's fair to share.

Like to share a bathroom.

No. That's not fair to them. They've got their own lives to live.

So yeah, and another option is you know, but I don't think you'd be thinking of this either, as you said if you needed a higher level of support or whatever, that's your option to think about whether you could purpose build something. So you'd sell that and put that into it.

Mmm.

So would they get that asset when you die? Or how would they because you couldn't easily liquidate that for the others could you?

No, no.

I suppose that's probably not an issue.

I think I'm very blessed with my family because they're not, I couldn't really see any of them raising that as an issue.

Sometimes that sort of thing is an issue.

Well I mean Wills are funny things sometimes you know, the last person in the world sometimes complains about a Will that you wouldn't believe it could happen. I think the only problem I would have with it is that there'd be a couple of them that would want to be the one to do it. You know that ...

That one might be offended if you go with the other one?

Well yeah, that and that there'd be at least two of them and the daughters-in-law would be part of it, who would sort of say won't you come with us.

So you're talking about sons. The other ones who'd want you to do it are sons.

Yes, yes, well the other one that lives in Sydney. I mean I wouldn't go to Sydney. They've got their own home in Sydney. Well I wouldn't be looking at that. And then there's [name deleted] you see who ...

How old's [name deleted]?

Whether [name deleted] would sort of look at building a home and having a separate unit for me. See I, it wouldn't work with [name deleted] because she would; it would be living with [name deleted] in that case you know. It wouldn't be a separate unit.

As long as she does her work she wouldn't be here a lot of the year anyway.

No, no.

So that would defeat the purpose if you were looking for that bit of extra help.

Yeah.

I've got another question. I've got a few questions up my sleeve. So if, it might not bring up anything for you and if not, I'll try something else. So what does growing older here mean to you?

Growing older here? Well I'd have to say on growing older here that I'm comfortable because I've got all the things I need in this unit. Like I have a walk in shower and I have a rail in the shower.

So you paid to get that?

I had that done yeah, and that was after my first hip. And I also have a special toilet chair because then again, anything lower is, and all toilets are low. Why people build them all low. I'll never, but they really are and it can be a great problem for me if I go to someone's home, I can't get up off the toilet you

know because I need something with arms to push off. So the things I've got in my home here make me comfortable.

Yeah. It means you've got control over all the things you need to do?

Yeah I've even got the higher chair as you can see there so.

Yeah I saw that. It's been built up.

Yeah, so ...

It looks like a very favourite comfortable chair there.

Well yes, I tend to sit in that one because I can also, I mean the sun streams through that window in the afternoon. I mean we've just lost it now but it's been really beautiful coming through there.

Normally when I first came I had a beautiful view out there as well, so ...

Mmm-mmm.

See I've got the ramp out the back. You see I've got the things that really make me ...

Independent?

Yes.

And your car's just out here.

I park just there while I'm still driving. If it came to the worst I'd probably get taxis.

Yeah, you can do that but the affordability is an issue for some people.

Well I can remember my husband telling me that really if you own a car it costs you at least \$120 a week by the time you cover ...

Taxis are cheaper.

And you're not going to pay that in taxis. Plus I've got, because of what I've had done I have a card for you know a taxi rate if I need it, and things like that.

So you get a special rate?

Yeah, there was a time and it was for about 12 months when my hip was done a second time. See it was done back in 1992 and then in '99. I had to have it redone because the screws had broken off, and after

that, that was a problem because it kept dislocating which meant that I couldn't drive a car and then the car had to be. The car has now been changed so that I drive it left foot.

Oh.

So that all took time and I had to get permission to do that and then I had to send over to Melbourne for the part and take it to Richmond to have it done. And then I had to have driving lessons to make sure I could drive the car left foot. So it was for about 12 months I couldn't drive the car myself.

And it was quite an important thing to help you stay independent wasn't it?

Well it is really. I've got wonderful children as you've probably gathered, who would not hesitate if I said I need to go here, there and everywhere. Who would either do the thing for me or come and pick me up, as they did during that time, but I found it just so frustrating because having had the car and having been able to get in the car and drive if I wanted a bottle of milk or post a letter or ...

Rather than wait on someone else?

Rather than having to depend on someone else to come and do it for me but you learn that. I mean you learn to make sure you've got everything when they're here so if I had to I could probably ...

If you plan ahead you wouldn't have to make those extra trips out.

Yes, yes of course, and sometimes you decide you know you want to go down the street for something or other but if you think ahead, if I could think ahead there'd be nothing to stop me sort of ringing me daughter and saying, you know when you come up.

She'd be coming up anyway.

Well either she comes up to me or I go to her at least two or three times a week so she'll ring and say what are you doing today, you know so ...

So do you have any worries about the age of your car? Would you have any problem replacing it and getting that fixed up again?

Uh, I've been spoilt because when I lived in [name deleted] Crescent one of my neighbours was a mechanic and so he has always looked after my cars for me and every three or four months if I ring him up he will come up and get the car and check it over, and you know grease and oil it and ...

So how old is it?

This one? This one, I think it is about an '87.

Mmm and it's mechanically sound? And it's easy to get into?

Well it's, yeah well it seems to be all right.

So would he give you advice if you bought another one?

Well he probably would, yeah.

How long have you had that one?

I've had that one about four years. Before that one I had a corolla which was an absolutely wonderful car which I had so little trouble with all the time that I had it but again [name deleted] would come and ... mmm. I mean he looked after it all that time, and he just said to me he thought you know the time had come when I just should be looking for another one now.

Uh, he has said that?

When I bought this one it was he who said it was time when I should with the corolla.

So no doubt he would do that again?

Yeah, mmm.

And what's this one?

This is a Pulsar. You see I had a lot of trouble getting a small automatic. I mean the small cars tend to be manuals.

Mmm.

And I wanted a four door 'cos I don't like a two door so it was really difficult to find.

I find it so much easier than using a manual around town.

You like the manual?

No I like the automatic. I've got used to an automatic and I don't think I could go back to a manual.

No I don't think I could go back to a manual either. I mean I learnt in a manual but ...

Me too, but it seems like such a complete waste of time. I mean you're behind people in their manuals you've gotta wait for them to change gears. They always pause that little bit and

then you think, what are they doing and afterwards you realise that they've got a manual car.
[Pause]) So do you find people treat you any differently now that you're older?

No.

This is something some people have said to me but it's different for people, yeah.

Well I suppose, I mean I recognise I'm older so I tend, so I tend to make a joke of it with the people I know. I don't, I mean ...

You don't look that old, I must tell you.

Well I am. I mean if you see me sometimes, sometimes I'm worse than others you know when it's really cold and I've been sitting for a while.

Well you do look like a very big strong person. You look very healthy.

Yeah. I am healthy. That's one of the blessings I do have. I have, the reason I have all this trouble with bones is because I have Paget's disease which is a bone problem but un somebody said to me the other day, did you have the flu injection and I said well I've never had a flu injection in my life because I've had flu once in my life I think is all I've ever had.

That's amazing.

I've got a, I seem to have a great immune system. If I get a cold or look like getting a cold I throw it off within two days.

Mmm.

I hardly ever take aspirin. If I get a headache I'll take one aspirin and it's gone. So yeah, I'm very healthy, which is a blessing of course.

But you're a bit slow though with your hips and knee.

Oh I'm slow. That's it.

But do people get impatient with your slowness?

Oh no, well you see I tend to say to people you know if I'm in front of people and they want to get past I tend to stand aside and say, look I'm slow, you go in front of me.

Mmm.

And sometimes people have said, no don't worry about that. That's fine. But other times they do and sometimes they even say, thank you. Yeah so.

Mmm.

And I find in most cases people hold doors open for me.

And what about with driving? I mean do you ...

With driving I think sometimes the person behind is getting impatient with that but I've only ever been tooted about twice and, the roundabout down at the end of [name deleted] Street is really a difficult roundabout because there's usually traffic along [name deleted] Street and to come down, to get right around that roundabout it's a sharp, I don't know it takes you a time to get around it and I've been tooted once by some ... Oh they were only young kids behind me.

Some people just want to scream straight through.

Probably, yeah. I just thought up in the air with you, if they want to scream past you at a hundred miles an hour. Well if people do that I always move over to allow people to do that if they want to on the road, you know.

Mmm, it's always better to do that isn't it. Yeah.

Well I mean if, rather than having people impatiently wishing they could get past you.

[Laughs.] They get past and the problem's solved.

I mean half the time I'm doing the speed limit that's supposed to be done anyway and if they want to pass me, ok and go over the speed limit that's their ...

That's their risk.

That's their risk you know.

Well it's not they're risking other people too. But it's their choice and their responsibility.

Yeah. I mean it always amazes me, they zoom past you at the lights and you get to the next lights and they're waiting there anyway.

So what do you gain? Yeah.

Yeah. It makes no sense.

Yeah I find that too.

But people recognise I'm slow. I mean I recognise I'm slow you know and I can't do things like I used to.

So you don't find, you don't get impatient with that?

Oh, no I suppose I allow for that. I've learnt, I know learnt that. At this time of my life if I don't get it done ...

So it must change how you look at things then?

Oh yeah. I mean you've got to accept that. I think that's part of the problem. We don't want to accept that things are changing for us, really.

Yeah. Some people don't accept it all.

No, no. Whereas I just do I suppose because I've had, you know having had these reconstructions; that was a time when I had to ...

Readjust?

Yes, so I guess that's helped me with readjusting for age as well. I get frustrated with the bed, changing my bed, yeah because I have a double bed but ...

Oh you've got to go around it and you've got to bend down.

Yes but I find now that my daughter comes see, and I leave it until my daughter youngest daughter's here and we change the bed together.

But probably a better thing would be a single bed even one that was quite high and even one you could raise and lower.

Yeah, probably ideal.

I mean there are some excellent beds around aren't there; pneumatic ones where you can press a button.

Yeah I should really do that but it's, it's the effort of making the decision that that's what I should so. You know ...

If you can still do it with some trouble you can still do it, versus making your life easier.

And see as I say my daughter spoils me, cos if I want to change the bed she'll come up. I can just leave it and then some time through the day she'll be up to change it with me, so ...

Mmm, I suppose it's nice to have her up.

Yeah, yeah, and see I can close that door so the bedroom's not seen as untidy, cos I've got a thing about that even though my washing's there and I'm sorry about that but [indicating clothes horse].

Oh you need that in this weather it never gets dry otherwise does it?

Yeah. 'Cos I do tend to like it tidy you know.

It is tidy. It's very nice. So I know how you feel. When people come you'd rather you didn't have washing here.

I'd move that if someone ... and I should have moved it for you, but I just thought, I'd moved it Friday and that lot's quite damp, so I put there out this morning.

I have a front closed in verandah facing north and, I've got a whole lot of clothes in there at the moment. I got sick of the sight of them in the lounge room in front of the heater.

Well you see that's excellent. The fan, the heat that comes through that, it's great. They'll be dry you know before I go to bed tonight, so ...

Mmm, so the bedrooms and bathroom are in there and there's just a little entranceway?

Yeah, I was laughing the other night because I had visitors for tea and one of the other ladies in the unit and she said she had six doors in her hall and I thought gosh that's a lot of doors and when I counted, I've got six doors myself. You know, there's this one and the bedroom one and the linen cupboard one and [name deleted]'s bedroom and the bathroom and the toilet, so yeah so ...

And you've got a good-sized linen cupboard here?

Oh just an ordinary size, well I suppose it's all right really but in [name deleted] Crescent I had this huge linen cupboard, which absolutely spoiled me of course.

Mmm, have you got storage anywhere else here?

I've got storage under the house; underneath around that side. It's, it's, you've got to bend down to get in under it but I can sort of put a lot of things in there that I'm not using you know, I'm not wanting.

So if you go in a unit you may lose that. Sometimes they have storage.

Yes, yeah.

So how would you feel about having to move, about having to pack up and move and get rid of more things?

I'd hate it. I hated it when I had to pick up and move from [name deleted] Crescent and I was a lot younger then but of course that was a house and we'd been living in that for '64 to '88 so and it had all the family you know in that house and my husband was a hoarder and we had all these bedrooms and he was a practical man so that he did everything so he had all the things to do that but, mmm ...

So it must have taken you a while to get ready to move?

Yes. It did. I think that's probably why I took the four years but then also I had been advised by another friend who had been a widow before me ...

Not to rush it.

Not to do it too quickly, you know that too many widows tend to do it too fast and they're not ready for it so ...

Yeah. You need some time to think about what it's like to be on your own and what it is you want and how it feels to be on your own and what you're going to be doing with your life.

Yeah. And I had all the familiar things in there.

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 14

How long have you lived here?

Fifty-four years. See, we came here after the war in 1946.

That's a very long time to live in the one place.

Yes.

So you raised your family here in this house?

Oh well. The girls were all born in Melbourne during the war, before, and during the war. And then after the war we came over here and I had three boys.

Mmm, so how many girls?

Three girls.

And three boys?

Mmm.

So can you tell me about where you lived in Melbourne before you moved here?

Oh we lived out at [name of suburb deleted], just in a flat, mmm, you know. Oh no. That's right. Ah, ah just before the war we bought a house over in [name of suburb deleted]. You know a small weatherboard house in [name of suburb deleted]. And I lived there because my husband went into the Army and he was away for six years.

Oh.

And uh ...

So some of the girls were born during that time?

Yes, yes all the girls. Oh well [name deleted] was born before he went and the other two during the war.

That must've been hard.

No it wasn't that hard. I suppose when you're young you don't notice it do you? [Laughs.]

Mmm and what led to you moving here?

My husband was a Tasmanian originally. He was one of the [name deleted]s and his uncle died and left him some money and he wanted to go on the land so we came down here and bought this place; never regretted it.

Mmm, that was what I was going to ask you. Do you regret it? It's a hard life isn't it?

Not really. Oh well it is because of being financially difficult and with three boys, putting them on the land, it was financially difficult but uh I've never regretted it, not once.

So are the three boys on the land?

Two of them are. One is here. One is up at [name of town deleted]. He's got a property up there. But the youngest, his wife died and he gave up farming. [He] lives in Hobart now.

Mmm, so you're lucky to have had sons aren't you?

Yes, mmm. Yes. Mmm; though three makes it difficult. You've got to split up farms, don't you pet.

So you split up some of this farm?

No, no, no, no, no, no. We haven't but it, it's you know becomes financially difficult. The eldest son is here. We've got this place but you know we have to, financially help the others.

So you've helped them to buy other farms?

Yes, yes, mmm.

So how, by going guarantor when they bought it or?

Going what?

Did you go guarantor, on a loan when they?

I suppose so. They took out mortgages and things and, yes.

Mmm.

I'm not quite certain how that was arranged then really. You take out mortgages and I suppose they had to pay something to start with.

So were you able to organise some capital to get them started?

Yes, we gave a bit, yes, mmm. But they still, we still all owe a fair bit of money. Yes, things ... you don't you know, incomes are never enough to pay off mortgages, mmm.

Well they must have liked this life, too.

Yes, well I think that's the trouble, you bring them up to it so they like it; although, one of my grandsons is definitely a townie. He's not, although brought up in the country, [grandson's name deleted]'s at uni and he never wants to come back but [grandsons' name deleted] does.

So how many grandchildren do you have?

Altogether? 16.

Oh that's a lot.

Mmm.

And some of those?

The girls of course, the girls have got four and four and two; eight nine ten, the girls.

And what have the boys got?

Two boys, boy and a girl and two boys.

Mmm, so where do the girls live? They don't live on the land?

No, no, no. Well one, the younger girl died. She was on the land and her; you know well they're still on the land.

Are you talking about your son's wife?

No, one of my daughters; you said the daughters. Yes and one married a farmer but he's retired now and the other one lives in Melbourne. She married a, businessman. Oh went to England, you know as girls do and met an Englishman and they came out here and he's ... They live in Melbourne and they've got the boy and the girl, mmm.

So what do you like about living here?

Tasmania's nice and quiet. It's friendly you know. Nice climate. You haven't got crowds around you.

That's exactly what I like about it too.

Yes. No I don't like you know traffic and crowds and things it's ...

Yeah.

Although I was quite happy living in Melbourne. I was brought up in Melbourne.

Yeah, because the other people I've spoken to so far, they were born and grew up in this area

Did they?

Yes, and they're very committed to this area.

Yes, oh well I am too, committed to the area. Yes.

You've been here such a long time, mmm.

Yes.

You're children have grown up here.

Yes, yes, mmm.

And you know everyone around here?

And they all went to school, you know, primary school around here. We used, at [name of town deleted], we used to have a nice little school, one teacher, up to grade six and uh we had a post office and a railway station, but they've all gone now.

So that was somewhere between here and [name of town deleted]?

It was just across the road there, there was a school. And the railway station of course was there and the train used to stop and we used to go to town, all by train but ...

So by town you mean Hobart?

In Hobart, yes, mmm. And sometimes the children would go back to school you know and all by train but ...

So it's a lot harder in rural areas now isn't it? It is something to do with, I suppose, the global economic situation ...

Oh yes.

And also the economic rationalisation in this country that means you know the small schools going and the trains.

Well it's, transport you see. They take the children now. They have the school bus and [name of town deleted] children even go into [name of town deleted] and all the [name of town deleted] children go into [name of town deleted]. Yes at the [name of town deleted] school here they had about 20 children at one stage, and uh that's when the girls went.

Mmm, and there's something pretty nice about going to a small school.

Oh I think it's, I don't think it does them any harm and then they sort of before the boys finished they were going into [name of town deleted]. Now [name deleted], he's the elder boy, he didn't go into Oatlands at all. He went straight from [name of town deleted] to Hobart boarding school whereas the other two they closed [name of town deleted] and then the other two went into [name of town deleted] by bus for a few years.

And then they went to boarding school?

And then they went to boarding school when they were eleven or so.

Mmm which seems to be what happens a lot ...

Well ...

When you live in an area like this.

Well, in [name of town deleted] you can't go right through to you know, matric, finish. So you're better to send them younger because if they don't go until they're about 13 or 14 they find it a lot harder, you know.

Mmm.

To, get away from home; get away from the environment.

Yeah and establish themselves with their peer group I suppose.

Yes. It seems to suit them better when they are younger. Well I never had any trouble. Once or twice, but nothing really. They weren't really unhappy.

Mmm, so they when they were ...

They accepted it. It was the thing and they did it. There were no arguments. There was no questioning.

When they get to 13 or 14 suddenly they argue and answer back.

Well that's it. Yes, mmm

It's harder to get them to do things then.

Mmm-mmm.

I've found.

Yes.

So do you feel safe living here?

Oh yes. I lock the door now at night but there once was a time when I never bothered.

And what about the people who live around here? Do you have good neighbours?

Yes. Well other farms round about. Yes, mmm, I don't see a lot of them because most, you see I'm the older generation now and it's the next generation that are taking on the farms and doing all the work and you see there's [name deleted] left over there and [name deleted] but no older ones except, you know, very few of us now.

Yes so that's another pattern too isn't it, that people do pass their property on to their children.

On to their children, yes, mmm.

And often they would move when they do that?

Well some do, not many, mmm, not many. Some you know stay on the place like me here and my son's, in a house, is a little bit further over, but his boys are growing up now. He's in his fifties and his boy's you know will be taking over before you know where you are. His one boy, one doesn't, he goes to town and lives in town, mmm. He's just started at [name deleted] College.

No great grandchildren yet?

Oh yes, yes. I've got uh six.

Mmm.

But that's the grand daughter who lives in Melbourne has four. And the grand daughter who lives out at, in the country, her husband's a farmer and they live out there. She's got two.

It must be a wonderful thing to have come here, you and your husband with three children and now to have all this.

Oh yes, mmm. Oh yes.

All the different generations.

Mmm, the ones from Melbourne love to come and stay.

Huh.

I had them, after Easter they came for a few days you know. One goes out collecting eggs. Every half hour she goes out to collect and of course the chooks weren't laying well, so they had to go and plant them for her, that was [name deleted] and [name deleted] collects bones. There's a great heap of old bones outside there behind the garage.

Mmm, from slaughtered animals?

No, no, no, no; from dead sheep, round the paddocks. Oh you know, well you always find a bit here and there mmm, and uh they love to ride the motor bikes and you know, [name deleted] and [name deleted] had a small motor bike when he was ten and of course they, [name deleted]'s legs weren't long enough but this last time they were and he could ride the bike too.

Mmm, so do you worry about keeping track of them?

No, no. Oh no. Oh their parents come too now, these days. Yes, mmm. No, oh no. My children used to run wild, the boys anyhow. You know in those days there was no television and they used to go out hunting rabbits and it was nothing to walk out to the river which was a couple of miles. And these days no one would dream of walking that far than, I don't know. They go fishing out there and all that sort of thing but they don't do it these days.

Oh yes we're so used to having everything happening so quickly now aren't we?

Yes, mmm.

It must be the influence of the car.

There's the car yes. You'd be lost without transport I think. You know I'm still driving so I ...

You've got quite a nice recent model car too.

Well a couple of years I've had, although the boys always buy me second hand ones. They say if you buy a new one it drops the minute you take it out of the showroom.

I bought one that was about twelve months old.

That's your best bet, yes, yes. But the other Ute out there is [son's name deleted]'s. He lost his licence so he's told me to look after it for 12 months. [Laughs.]

Was he speeding?

No, drink driving. Yes.

They're pretty savage with that.

Yes they are. So I've got to look after it for twelve months for him, mmm.

So do you find this place hard to look after, all by yourself?

No, because I don't look after it that well I suppose.

So but do you get help then?

No, no, no, no.

Just you do it.

But you know with just yourself and people now and again, it doesn't get dirty.

Mmm.

No, no. It's the garden I struggle with. I try to keep that looking ... but it's, trouble with possums and rabbits and all those sort of things, and frosts in the winter, mmm.

It's hard for you to keep it looking nice.

Hard to keep it looking nice, but anyhow I'm not fussy. I'm not like [name deleted] who polishes her doorknobs and all the rest of it.

Makes a lot of work for herself.

Yeah well she gets help but, yes, mmm.

I don't know [name deleted].

Yes, yes, but she's my friend; one of my neighbours and her husband has died recently.

So you've got chooks?

Oh yes.

How many chooks have you got?

Seven that aren't laying at the moment and a rooster that needs to be knocked off and three [smacks hands together] chickens last year and they all turned into roosters. Ah but, ah but turkeys, a lot of turkeys, mmm.

So do you keep roosters with your hens normally?

I keep one. The others will get the chop.

So, so do you eat them?

Oh yes. Oh yes.

All right to eat?

Lovely, mmm, yes, mmm.

The turkeys, I have you know turkeys. You have trouble bringing turkeys up because feral cats and the devils and crows, mmm.

What they go for turkeys more than they do for?

Than for chickens; well the turkeys run where ... The chooks you keep shut up but the turkeys although last year I kept the chickens shut up for six weeks.

Until they get a bit bigger?

Until they are a bit bigger for the ... but even so, you always lose a lot, mmm. But it's nice to be able to give them away for Christmas, mmm.

So you give turkeys?

I don't keep them commercially. It's only just for myself and the family, mmm.

So you give them away?

Yes, mmm, if we've got enough. Some years you don't get any and some years you get a lot.

Mmm.

It all depends on the uh ...

So you've always done it that way?

I've always done it that way, yes, mmm.

So they hatch in spring do they?

Yes they start coming out in October.

And so you keep. You've got a mother one? Do you keep a mother or not?

Oh I usually have about six hens and a gobbler but they go off and lay and the crows'll take the eggs.

It's a battle you know and it's an interest. Some years you do all right and some years you don't.

[Conversation deleted.]

And do you have a vegetable garden as well?

Yes, yes.

And you do that yourself?

Not very successfully; yes, oh yes. Yes, yes, yes. Oh yes, I keep myself in most vegetables, yes. And you know peas and beans, you pick and freeze and keep yourself going till spring, all through the winter; carrots, parsnips, silver beet, you know.

Mmm, it's the sort of thing I'd like to do but don't do.

No, no, no. I like it doing that. I haven't got my broad beans in yet but I'll have to get them in soon.

Mmm. Good for the soil. It's all part of the cycle isn't it?

Yes, mmm.

The cycle of life.

Yes, mmm.

So, do you need to go to Hobart very often?

No. I don't go down ... I go less and less these days but I still play cards with some friends. We used to ... We started off all round here, years and years, oh it must've been 40, 50 years ago and we had a, used to, a lot of the men used to play at night and they've gradually disappeared and disappeared and disappeared and there's what, one two, three ... about four of us left and they can't drive this far anymore, so I still drive to Hobart and we have a game.

Mmm.

[Name deleted], mmm, [name deleted] had a stroke.

Dear.

A shame!

Recently?

Saturday. Oh, mmm.

Yes, she was one of our last players. She's into her nineties, so, mmm.

So you don't do that?

Oh I still go down. Yes.

Do you have four?

Yes, well my daughter, [name deleted] plays with us and makes the other up, so and now this one's had her stroke I don't know whether we'll be able to keep going anymore.

Mmm, so you play bridge?

Yes I play bridge on Mondays but they, we play [laughs] gets awfully complicated doesn't it. We always go down to uh a friend who lives at [name of town deleted] because her mother is 102, so she'd rather we go and play with her. I mean she leaves her and goes out.

Does she live on her own?

No, with her daughter. You see we play bridge with her daughter and we, we four of us play bridge every Monday down there at her place at [name of town deleted].

So I suppose her daughter would be fairly old too.

Oh. She's in her seventies, mmm-mmm.

Yes. So you've got an active social life.

Oh, sort of, yes, mmm.

Every week you do it.

Oh well, every week we play bridge, yes.

Oh so this is, last time I came up it was on a Monday and that's when you were going to play bridge.

Yes, yes. I play bridge every Monday, mmm.

Mmm.

Yes, mmm. Yes her mother was 102 last month.

So if you need any help here, like if you're sick or something do you get informal help from people, like from your neighbours you know, or your family or?

Oh, from family.

Have you been sick?

No. Well years and years and years ago when my husband was still alive but that's... He died 23 years ago now, mmm.

You've been on your own that long?

Yes, well, one of the boys was still home when he died and then the boy bought a property up at [name of town deleted].

Mmm.

And uh so I've been here, but the other son lives not far along there and you know he comes in ... Well he wouldn't come in today. He's crutching and uh I won't see him today at all.

So you've never really been on your own because you've had him?

Round about, yes, mmm.

So how long have you been on your own in this house though? Living in this house on your own even though you've got your son ...

Oh, 20 years. Mmm, yes.

So he moved not long after your husband died.

They moved out then the boys yes, well one lived and the other one was married and not living here anyhow.

Mmm. So you don't get any home help services or anything like that?

Well perhaps I could if I wanted to but I don't. I feel it's only me, why you know I can look after myself. And I'm very fortunate. I might be well up into my eighties but I'm very healthy.

Mmm.

I'm very fortunate like that, mmm.

So you look after yourself. You've eaten well. You haven't got overweight. You've remained active. They're all the things ...

Well I suppose so yes but I think, a lot of it's luck, isn't it?

Well I think there is some luck and I don't know, I'm still learning about these things. I suppose talking to older people, because some people do say, well you can really look after yourself, you know, do all the right things and yet something just happens.

Certainly to a lot of people, yes ...

So that you might, you know friends like, say a stroke, something like that?

Yes, mmm.

So you just cannot necessarily take good health for granted.

Oh no. Oh no. You can't take it for granted, but uh ...

So like arthritis or something?

Or I suppose, you know you get aches and pains but nothing worth going to the doctor for, mmm. I have to go to the doctor and get my driver's licence every ... you know, health wise, yes, mmm.

Mmm. So how often do you have to do that?

Oh, every 12 months. When you want your driver's licence renewed you have to go and get a medical certificate.

Mmm.

Mmm.

So you don't have to be retested.

You do when you're eighty-five, which is next year.

So if you couldn't get your licence would that make a difference?

Oh yes, a big difference, mmm. I've always said that once I lose my licence I'll go and live in [name of town deleted] but hopefully I won't lose it, mmm.

So you've got no issues with your housing here, or do you sometimes wish there were things you could change?

Oh, lots of things I'd change, yes.

Could you tell me about some of those?

Oh well, the house faces; mmm I've got no sun coming in. It's a cold house 'cos the you know in the old days they built houses to face the wrong way and ...

So this faces the wrong way?

Yes, mmm.

So this is where the sun is?

The sun comes in that way, yes.

But that'd be pretty nice then in here.

Oh. It's not enough. You know. I'd love a lovely big sunroom, nor' east sort of thing that other people have and I don't.

So you'd like a sunroom?

Oh well the sunroom out the front, it's cold in the winter and it doesn't get the sun you know for long ... in those days they didn't build houses to catch the sun did they?

[Conversation deleted.]

North, yes, well you'd get all the sun, yes, mmm. Yes, mmm.

It comes right into the room.

Yes.

So you'd get that [sun] here as well.

Yes I get it there but it's not a lot.

Mmm, there must be something wrong with my sense of direction because ...

That's north.

That is north?

Oh yes, mmm, oh yes the sun comes in there and it's the same in the kitchen but I would like a nice big glass window but anyhow it's not worth worrying about at my age.

Mmm.

You know I've got, I can keep warm otherwise.

Are there any alterations that would make it easier for you to keep living here if you, you know started to have problems with aches and pains, or you know if some things were a bit of a struggle? Is there anything here like are there steps or anything like that?

No, no, not much in, no steps only two in the front and none at the back. No, no, no. I'm quite happy with what I've got.

I noticed in the bathroom you don't have bath rails like some people have.

No, no, but, I haven't but I can manage to get ... The shower's over the bath, a shower recess would be nice because you know but a lot of people have it over the bath and you step over.

Yes, so a lot of people have a walk in shower put in.

Yes well that's right. That would be about the only thing that would, but still I haven't got room for that in my bathroom. It's not big enough, mmm.

Yeah, yours is like mine. I've got one of those mats too, to stop you slipping.

Yes, mmm. Yes, mmm.

When you are on your own if you had a fall it wouldn't be a very good thing would it?

No I suppose not but you've just got to be careful don't you, yes, mmm.

So your son looks in most days, so ...

Oh yes, he does.

So if you were to fall you wouldn't be likely to lie here for a couple of days. It does happen to some people doesn't it?

I mean occasionally he you know goes to town at weekends, stays nights that sort of thing and won't be home tonight because he's crutching down in [name of town deleted], mmm.

So he's got a family?

He's got two boys, mmm.

And they're at school?

One's at university and the other one's jackarooing up in New South Wales, yes, mmm, mmm.

So you already think moving to town will be a possibility.

Into [name of town deleted]; I've prepared for my old age. I've booked into the place in [name of retirement village deleted] for when I'm past living by myself; when I can't look after myself, mmm.

And I suppose you wouldn't be able to sell this house anyway, because ...

Oh well, it's part of the property. I wouldn't want to.

So you are one of those people in that situation who lives on the land and who ...

Yes.

Who then couldn't easily go and buy a place in town.

Oh no. Oh no. No, no. No, no; if I had to buy something, no. Well I'm still in partnership with my son as far as the property goes but, you know I would never want him to go and buy a house for me.

Mmm, yeah because it's enough of a struggle being on the land.

Yes.

Especially in recent times.

Yes, mmm.

It's been very hard and the money needs to go into the farm doesn't it? Not take it out.

Well in recent times he's been growing poppies which has been profitable over the last few years but now they're cutting us all back.

Yeah. I know.

They cut the prices back. They cut the acreage back. But he said last year he thought was a boom, yeah mmm, and wouldn't last.

Oh no.

[Conversation deleted.]

Yes I think the *[name of retirement village deleted]* is a wonderful asset for *[name of town deleted]*.

Mmm.

It really is.

I suppose that's the main way I got to know *[name of town deleted]*, through that organisation.

No, they've done a wonderful job for so many women and not only women. There are men in there too.

And it's all done voluntarily.

Yes, oh it's wonderful.

It does seem to work well in small local communities like this where people want to do it because they know the people.

*So do you give much thought then to what it would be like living in *[name of retirement village deleted]*? I mean do you feel you'd miss living here?*

Oh I'd miss living here. Oh definitely. Yes. But still it's the next best alternative isn't it?

Mmm. Do you think it would be nice to have the company of other people around you? Have you thought of that sort of thing?

Oh I don't miss them. No I don't miss company at all. I read a lot and I you know I've got plenty to do, the garden and the chooks and the turkeys and I've got plenty to keep me busy and go out and with my cards and socialize. I've got plenty to do. I don't miss company. No.

I know exactly what you mean.

No. I mean that's an attitude isn't it.

It is.

A lot of people who live by themselves say poor old me but, no I enjoy it. I think I enjoy living by myself having had a large family and having to look after and wait on other people all my life and now I think there's nobody else to worry about. It's me now. And I can please myself. And they, you know, all ring me up and how are you and you know and, it's, it's nice.

But you've earned it.

Oh I don't know about that but it's, it's ... I enjoy it.

Do you find people treat you differently now you're older?

I don't think so. Oh round [name of town deleted] perhaps. Uh, you know I don't know I think perhaps, they're more friendly towards me, perhaps. I don't know; never noticed the difference, no.

[Name deleted] said something about that didn't she? She said people give her more attention now.

Mmm. Well I don't want people waiting on me, you know. You know.

Mmm, and you don't look like you need it either.

[Laughs.] *Oh, oh, I do sometimes.*

You do?

Mmm.

You look very well.

Oh, I'm fortunate like that, yes. Well, when you've got company it always lifts you up doesn't it? It's when you get on your own and you know your shoulder aches or something or that sort of thing.

Yeah, yeah, I've been thinking about that because that's the sort of thing, when people, if you ask people if they feel lonely they talk about troubles rather than actually not having enough people around. It's like when people have troubles and feel sad.

Yes.

That's when they miss having other people there.

I think so yes. Company always gives you a lift, mmm. People to talk to, and people coming in and out. It's nice. Mmm, but at the same time I like my own company.

Mmm, so if people came in and out too often you probably wouldn't be real happy about it.

[Laughs.] *Perhaps not. They don't come in and out too often at all. I mean I go for days and not see anybody.*

Mmm, but you don't feel lonely when that happens.

[Clock strikes.]

No. What else do you want?

I don't know, just anything. I mean another one of the questions I've got but I don't know whether we've covered it but if it can get you to say anything, is what does growing older here mean to you, here in this house? You've said you can please yourself now, that's one of the things.

Yes. Mmm. Oh satisfaction. You know it's nice and it's nice to see the well, satisfaction as far as the farm goes. My son runs it very well and he's improved it, got you know irrigation and a lot of satisfaction in all that, mmm.

Seeing it having developed from what you started with?

Yes, from what we started with, yes, definitely.

So things must have changed a lot.

Yes well and another thing, he's happy on it although when things were tough we talked about you know, there must be more in life than this sort of thing when things are really tough but, they've improved a bit but you know, you get good weather and good seasons. It gives you a lift and it's all the difference otherwise you go to bed and worry you know, how you know we've got to buy feed all through the winter and things like that.

Yes. Oh we've had a lot of drought, mmm. Well we're still, only just, just ...

We've got a bit of green grass but whether we've got enough to last till the spring.

Because the rain came a bit late didn't it.

Too late, yes, mmm but at least we've got some and this weather is better than frosts. It's more likely to grow, mmm.

Mmm.

That's you know, I'm very interested in all that sort of thing but people in town don't have that.

Mmm, mmm, so it's very much part of your life.

Yes. It is very much part of my life.

So living here you are still part of it.

No I wouldn't want to have to live in Hobart. I'd rather you know ...

Stay here.

Mmm, not have to move but if it comes it comes and there's nothing you can do about it but ah I like the life.

Yes, it looks like a good life to me.

Yes it is. It's a very good life but still the boys they went through school with and they've turned out to be doctors and solicitors and running this and that and you know like [name deleted] was at school with what's his name, Gay up there at and Clifford in there and they were no good at school but look at what they've done, yes, mmm and you know the money they make and the wages they get and all that sort of thing. It makes you wonder doesn't it?

Well how much harder your son's worked and what he's got to show for it.

Oh yes. Oh yes. Well he's got the, he has the satisfaction of course in doing what he wants to do and I mean the other son up there at [name of town deleted] he's got two children you know and instead of sending them to boarding school he's bought a house in Launceston and I mean that's a struggle, so that they can go to boarding school because it's cheaper to pay, buy a house and pay a mortgage than it is to pay boarding school fees. They're all so expensive these days.

I have heard that people have been doing that.

Well you pay less, buy a house on a mortgage, you know, borrow the money and you've still got an asset whereas with boarding school well it's gone. I mean you've got your education I suppose.

Mmm.

But it's, they're quite happy with it. It's only a little house in Launceston there, not far from the school.

Mmm.

But the other son is over at [name of suburb deleted]. No I'm very fortunate, very fortunate. I've got very nice family and you know they've all had their ups and downs and their tragedies and that sort of thing but you know it's not ...

Mmm.

Part of life and it's how you handle things; you know what life throws up at you. It's how you handle it isn't it.

[Conversation deleted.]

[Tape turned off.]

Interviewee 15

How long have you lived here?

Sorry, I'm so deaf.

Well, in this house?

Fifteen years; March, March 1987 I think it was about. March 1987, I think we came up here.

And where did you live before you moved here?

In [name of suburb deleted], yes, we had a Housing Department home there because me husband, he had a very bad heart. He worked for Telecom but he started having dizzy spells climbing the masts and that, so the manager said we'll send you to the work's doctor and the work's doctor said well your heart's all blocked up [name deleted]. We advise you to give up work you know, but go and talk it over with your wife. So he came and told me and I said well what do you think I'd say [name deleted]? I said, I said I'd rather a live person you know. I'd rather have you alive and living on a little pension than you know, you could die, could collapse and die. So he gave up work when he was 57 you see. So we had this Housing Department home and the fella was going to matriculation at the time and he said, is it all right for me to go onto uni because you know there's not much else and we said yes. And of course he got a scholarship to go to uni and, he went to university and he left home when he was twenty to be a bit independent you know.

As I say we stayed there in [name of suburb deleted] and then, as I've said I've always been a saver. I've always been one to put a bit away and make sure I pay me bills. [Inaudible.] So [husband's name deleted] used to say to me, "My word Mabs, you're a very good manager". [Laughs.] Anyway, we saved some and then me brother died. I've got one brother I suppose who's up there [indicating heaven], he got killed in 1941, [name deleted]. He was ten years older than me, but me other brother, [name deleted], he was married and he died. His wife, he had, his wife had Alzheimers and he looked after her at home all the while. He gave up his job and I think it was just all too much for him and he passed away. And we invited him to come and stay with us in [name of suburb deleted], have a holiday but he said maybe next year Mabs, because I don't feel too good for traveling. Well what happened, he 'ad a massive heart attack in the night and he died.

Oh.

Well he left a will and he left all his money everything you know, they'd planned in case because they had no children. So I ended up getting \$50,000 from me brother

Mmm.

So that was for me, so when we got that I thought I'd try and save it just in case and then eventually we had this house in [name of suburb deleted], nice little garden, beautiful flowers in it but he got, it wasn't enough for [husband's name deleted]. He got bored so he saw this house in the paper, you know, our house, the one we're in now. And uh he said that looks nice Mabs. He said that looks nice, he said, in [name of town deleted]. He said, where's [name of town deleted] [laughs]? Anyway, he said I'd love to live there. He said it sounds lovely. He said, in the countryside he said and it's got a lot of fruit trees in the garden, be great for me, you know. So I said well first of all we'll have to go and see it, and so as he said it's in the [name of area deleted], so I said where's the [name of area deleted]. Anyway we came up and Mr [name deleted] on the Council, he'd bought it and he wanted to sell it again and uh, we went for dinner at the hotel and then, we inquired where this Mr [name deleted] was. Well we said well, we'll phone him up and tell him we wanted to look at the house.

And so he brought us in and we had a look around and [husband's name deleted] said it sure needs some renovating doesn't it. So it still had open fireplace you see and uh there was only a line with two props outside. So he said well uh, he said how much are you asking for it? Forty-two thousand or something. So [husband's name deleted] said well I'll have to do a lot of renovating so I'm offering you forty. So he said, well all right then. So I said well that was my money but I said [name deleted] can have what he likes, part of it, you see that part of it. So I put ten thousand away and then when it come to have that operation. You see Mr [name deleted] says I'll have to wait three years for Hobart Hospital. He said it's very bad, it wants doing but you've got to wait. So [husband's name deleted] said how long, so he said three years and [husband's name deleted] said you'll never live that long love, you won't live that long. I was almost in the wheelchair all the time then.

And, me son come up and he said, Mum, do you need to ask? He said. What money've you got? He said this house'll be here after you're gone the way you are now. Whatever we've got, I said we'll put a bit to it and we'll see how much we've got. So he said go on ask Mr [name deleted] how much he wants for it yeah, you see. So he said to [husband's name deleted] well, if you've got five thousand dollars we'll get her through the door.

Mmm-mmm.

So that's what it was. So I got in the following week. He took me in the following week in [name of hospital deleted] and, then we had to pay all the other bills which you know, so when I'd been there ten days you know how hard it was for parking there and, and [husband's name deleted] used to come and I'd say are you late and he'd say it took me half an hour to find a parking space.

Mmm.

And me son lived near you see, he lives off the main road there in [name of suburb deleted].

[Name deleted] Rd.

Yes, in [name deleted] Avenue up there in [name of suburb deleted]. So he used to every teatime. Anyway I'd have been there ten, nine days, Mr [name deleted] comes to sees me and says I've 'ad a phone call from Dr [name deleted]. He said, being that [husband's name deleted]'s got this heart condition, we reckon it's too much for him coming down and they're bringing a patient in, so be ready and we're bringing you up. So that's when I ended up

So that's when you came to [name of town deleted; referring to multi-purpose centre].

I ended up in [name of town deleted].

[Conversation deleted.]

I think it was [name deleted] and [name deleted] come for me with the ambulance, they were bringing a patient in and you looked up. I remember one afternoon saying, "I'll have a little sleep." And when I woke up you said, "Oh you just look like a rosy cheeked little girl". [Laughs.] Rosy cheeked. I'd been dreaming about some nurse getting married or something like that. [Laughs.] And anyhow that's how I come to live here because I thought of [husband's name deleted] and as I said to somebody else, Miss [name deleted], [name deleted] next door, said I never see you much Mabs, she said, I bet you miss your [husband's name deleted]. I said I do, I said. Terrible, I said but I try to keep busy. I said well I can't do the garden. Oh no, she says you won't be able to. I said, oh when [husband's name deleted] was here I said, he used to say the house is your responsibility and the garden's mine and it worked well you see like that.

Mmm.

That's me so far, today.

Yeah, and what do you like about living here?

Oh, I think people are friendly. And I don't know, now I'm on me own you see I've only got one son and I've got no other relatives [inaudible]. I've got no relatives here but my son and his wife and two little girls and they live in [name of suburb deleted] but what I like is, there's somebody to take me out if I want to go. I mean now I miss [husband's name deleted] because we used to pop off to Hobart but now I know, now because I've been told since; Dr [name deleted]'d already said that [husband's name deleted] would no longer been able to drive his car if he'd 've gotten over those illnesses because his mind was confused, so they wouldn't be giving him a licence to drive anyway so we wouldn't 've been able to go, but that's what I said I like, people are sociable and friendly and uh, I

can go to the lunches twice a week, which I enjoy. I enjoy the company and, if there's any trips I've said I'll go as long as it's where it's not too hot. I can't stand travelling much in hot weather but em, I enjoy the trips out and I enjoy just playing bingo there in [inaudible]. That's what I miss. I've always talked a lot like me little granddaughter. She'll get on the phone and she'll talk her head off and I was just like that you know, cos I was the youngest of the family. We were a very loving family. We never had much money but we had a lot of love for one another and, [husband's name deleted] used to say, a long time ago he used to say to me if anything happened to one of us Mabs he said, I hope I go first. I said why do you say that for, silly, we're going to grow old together you know.

Mmm.

[Conversation deleted.]

I think uh it's just the people to talk to that I miss but as I say that Multi-Purpose Centre is the best thing you ever did in [name of town deleted].

It's a wonderful place isn't it?

It is a wonderful place and even [son's name deleted], he works for the [name deleted] Council you know, he says Mum, we do a lot, we try and do a lot for the pensioners with Meals On Wheels and the other free concerts at the Town Hall and all things like that but, he said we've not got what you've got at the Multi-Purpose Centre and that's what I think is, I wouldn't like to leave it. And he'd often say come and live with us Mum and I'd said you've not got room and anyway you're both out at work all day. I'd have no company; well I wouldn't know anybody that lived there. I don't know any of their [stressed] neighbours. [Inaudible.] So he comes up when he can you know. He's very good. He's a good lad I don't know what I would've done without him but; you know I'm happy to stay here. And I think people are friendly and I go out with [name deleted] and [name deleted] when we go out somewhere and, if we don't go out I don't mind staying in and I do me 'ouse in the morning and I turn the video on for the exercises, so I sat down and did me exercises and [inaudible].

And when your son comes up does he bring his family with him?

Well you see, em his wife's a hairdresser and she has a hair salon in the [name deleted] Arcade there in Hobart. He works three days in the week but he has the two children all day Saturday.

Mmm.

Well when they were a bit younger he used to bring them up in summer time and we'd very often go to [name of town deleted]. They liked [name of town deleted], they liked to go to [name of town deleted] but now the eldest little girl, she's all to be seven next month and she's started 'aving the swimming lessons on Saturday morning and so he takes her there, and then he goes to the market with

[other grand daughter's name deleted]. He goes to the market with [grand daughter's name deleted] and they 'ave a walk round and then they go and pick [other grand daughter's name deleted] up. And then she plays soccer now in the afternoon.

Mmm.

So 'is Saturday's taken up you see, so he's only got Sunday so I don't mind them to come up on Sundays, and 'e has come up a few Sundays but usually on his own. So [daughter-in-law's name deleted] might take the children to her mother's. They live in [name of suburb deleted] but they bring them both up sometimes, but the little one's, oh, the little monkey, she gets on the phone you know last year, you know we 'ad that whats'isname at Christmas time, January when we had that fair that was on and you know in the Gardens. Well we took the two children. They had a wheelchair. I had to sit in the wheelchair. They put me in the wheelchair and [daughter's name deleted], there was a house with the stalls outside and she went and she saw this plastic phone and she picked it up and she walked off with it. And I said [grand daughter's name deleted] come back you've not paid for it and she's talking away on this phone and we all say, hey that's not paid for. And I said how much and she said oh, we'll say 50 cents so I said here you are, here I'll give you a dollar, so she was happy with that. But she come up one day she did, they've both got mobile phones, and she picked that up.

[Conversation deleted.]

So do you find the house hard to look after?

Well [pause] not really. I mean there's a lot want doing to it really. I mean the mistake we made when we bought this cottage ...

Yes.

Was we come in too suddenly. We came in and loved it and I only looked at it twice and then [husband's name deleted] went and got and ordered the furniture to be picked up, you see. So we came up once and I 'ad a look round and I washed the floor and made sure the cupboards were all clean and I said the floor cupboard's a bit of a mess isn't it. So 'e said oh it'll be all right for a while and uh, I thought oh well, we'll manage. So anyway we brought, we brought lino for the bathroom and laundry and of course we moved in you see and this has gradually gone worse.

Oh [inaudible].

And we kept wondering how. And [husband's name deleted] kept saying oh well, we'll move some furniture in there and put the lino down but we 'ad such difficulty getting these sideboards and this table had to be taken into small pieces to get them through the doorways. You see the rooms are, the was quite opposite one and you can't, and this table we dropped down and brought in, in parts, and so

I said I don't know how we're going to get any lino down. So that's the only thing, I say to [son's name deleted], I said every time I wash me floors I've never lived in a house yet with such disgraceful lino. I said oh well shut your eyes to it. And [son's name deleted]'ll say, said I'll come up and do it for you one day and I said it wouldn't be a day love, it would take you know moving all this stuff into there. How would I get me sideboard into there? So that's the only thing is, I can clean floors and things like that but I can't get down and do anything and I don't try because, as long as it's reasonably clean and then [name deleted]'ll come and Hoover me bedrooms and me lounge for me. I do me polishing. I like to keep busy. I'm used to it you see so, yes I can manage the housework. As I said to you [name deleted], me fruit trees just were pretty hopeless this year because [husband's name deleted] he always meticulously pruned the trees every two or three years and pruned the rose trees a bit every, and, they'd not been done for four years you see 'cause he was starting and he got diabetic and then he got cancer and it took hold of him and he didn't touch the garden you see and that's what happened, then the trees really need a good prune back and if I can get that, [name deleted]. He did promise to come up but I believe he's working in Hobart now so whether he will come up to me I don't know. Me son wanted to get somebody for me but he said to me you know, sometimes these people Mum they say they'll do this and that for you just to suit themselves and then they don't carry out all the promises. Well the young brother, [name deleted], and his mother come and did the lawns for me the last time, about a month ago, and I told her about me hip and oh she said my mother's in a nursing home with a hip and a hip and brace but, as long as they come, if they'll come and do that I'll be happy. It they just prune them back. Then as [name deleted] said this tree, it was a lovely. It was a greengage plum.

Mmm.

And they were so beautiful. I used to give a lot away to people who made jam but this year they're like little bullets. I can actually knock them off with me stick but apart from that I just do what I think I can do and I don't try and do what I can't think I can do, you know.

So is there anything you'd like to change around here to make it easier to live here?

Pardon.

Is there anything you'd like to change, like have repaired or make it just you know so it's easier for you to live here and look after the pl ...

No. I'm managing so far. A man bought a house somewhere near the, RSL club I think. He works with [son's name deleted] on the Council and he come up and he renovated it. It was an old house and he's made it two story. 'ave you seen it?

Yes.

Well 'e works with [son's name deleted] and 'e said he told [son's name deleted] one day. He come to [husband's name deleted]'s funeral and 'e said, one day 'e said, "When your mother's ready I'll go and do a bit of decorating for her". So, I want the lounge room ceiling, definitely wants doing. And the hallway and all the doors and that and then in here and the bathroom, that's I want doing painting. But if 'e can do it and if 'e can't, I'll find somebody which 'll be in my time probably next spring.

Yeah.

'd be a good idea. But this man come, 'e said it was the day of the that fair right just because I'd be in the wheel chair when 'e come over [laughs] and he said how are you [name deleted] and [son's name deleted] introduced 'im to me and 'e said oh 'e said [name deleted]'s told me a lot about, a lot about this old house and I said you'll 'ave to come through and 'ave a look through it some time and 'e said yes you'll 'ave to come over and see mine, but neither of us 'ave been in contact since but erm.

It's a lovely old house, mmm.

But erm 'e said, I said you know I said when we 'ad the wood heater going sometimes if there's smoke and the smoke sticks to the ceiling and especially the lounge. It's awful. It's awful streaky but, that's one of the things [husband's name deleted] did, he put Bradley batts in the roof and went when Saxon Heaters came in [name of town deleted] and he ordered a wood heater and of course he put it in himself. He put a wood heater in. Yeah, he did that himself.

Yeah.

And you know you remember when what's'isname lived next door. What was 'is name? The policeman and 'is wife, [name deleted].

When they lived there 'e used to come in and help [husband's name deleted] and he helped him put the rotary 'oist up and take the old, old lines down and then 'e helped him build a woodshed.

Mmm.

So those are the things [husband's name deleted]'s done to make it [inaudible]. As I say if that man doesn't let me down over the garden 'cause I can't, I don't think I could cope with another year of picking all the fruit up like I 'ave done. That's a great [inaudible]. You shouldn't be bending down picking buckets of fruit up, Mabs, she said.

She said you might fall and nobody'd know you'd fallen you know. Nobody'd know so uh I've done it another year. This is as it is now, you know.

So what about your neighbours? Would you feel there'd be neighbours here that you could call out to?

No, not really. [Name deleted] next door, I saw her walk past one day. Saturday afternoon that was it. I'd just gone over to the garden to get some fruit off the tree and I thought I'll take a few more of those before the birds get the lot and I was just going to get some in a bucket when [name deleted] comes round and, hullo Mabs she says, I've not seen you in a long while and I said yes same about you. I said I suppose you've been on holidays and she said no I've 'ad a knee.

[Conversation deleted.]

She 'ad a complete. She 'ad it about eight weeks ago.

Is she older or what age is?

No. She's younger than me.

Mmm.

She'd be about, she'd be younger.

[Conversation deleted.]

[Referring to her neighbours, and explaining they either had problems of their own or were too busy, hence she could not look to them for help:] [Name deleted] *used to live there and and, [name deleted] used to often go through and sit and talk to [name deleted] and I'd go over and sit with [name deleted] because she 'ad two bad knees.*

[Conversation deleted.]

And I used to say do you want your washing hanging out or bringing in or anything? Do you want anything from the shops? You know, and [name deleted]'d be there.

Mmm.

But she said she 'ad this operation eight weeks ago but she's all right now and she says she can walk. She says she's in no pain and she can walk without a stick. She was going round to see [name deleted].

Mmm.

You know [name deleted] that lives near [name deleted]? So, [name deleted] said 'ow are you coping now without your [husband's name deleted]. She said I miss seeing him in the garden and I said you're not alone. [Name deleted] 'as a lot of visitors. She's always got visitors. She 'as someone to do her washing and ironing and someone else was doing her shopping and since I come here she's

always 'ad someone to do her cleaning because she 'ad a bad back, I said she 'ad a bad back so no, I couldn't rely on [name deleted], I don't think so.

Mmm, so what about if you needed something from the shop? How do you...

Oh, oh, that's organised, the lady who does me Hoovering, [name deleted], she usually comes Monday about two o'clock as a rule and, I always, I 'ave me groceries made out and on the way out of 'ere she drops it in at the grocery shop to [name deleted].

And they deliver?

[Yes] *And that's good because, and 'e brings in on Friday about five o'clock so that's all organised.*

Good.

Because 'e always says, as I said about money; I always 'ad a \$50 bill ready for [name deleted]. I open up me dinner money in me little round lolly box and when [name deleted] comes around five and he always knocks and says, it's me Mabs and I say [inaudible]. It's me Mabs and he'll come out and have a little chat if 'e's got time and I give 'im \$50 and he'll give me what was left of my grocery money you see, so it works out well.

It works out well and I think I told you when [husband's name deleted] was first sick in 'ospital I was back and to every time of the week getting a little bit of the groceries and [husband's name deleted] said, Mabs why don't you let them bring them. [Name deleted] and 'is wife used to. [Name deleted] or 'is wife used to bring and give what's'sisname, [name deleted], a list and they do it, so that's fine, that's fine. I've no worries in that way. I've not much worries at all, except that I could be fit and well but I try to get better each day.

[Comment deleted.]

Yeah. Yeah. That's what sister [name deleted] said to me, that's one thing about you Mabs, you try and she said you think positive and I said, you've got to 'aven't you.

[Comment deleted.]

Yes. I mean I've always been one, I've always thought of other people before me. That's what [son's name deleted] said, you did it with me and I know you did it with Dad. You did it with me Granddad before you come to Australia because, me Mum and Dad had lost me brother in 1941 in March he got killed and then I was 21ne in the June and then in the July my mother she was doing the washing, you know the old wooden mangle.

She was putting something through the mangle or that sort of thing and her heart, all of a sudden collapsed and died, so I had to try and look after me Dad. Me Dad was shocked you know and [inaudible] and upset. And I was on munitions and ah, just looked after 'im. And I looked after 'im until we were coming to Australia and then my doctor said, don't worry about your father Mabs. He needs a, what was it called he had a hernia, and he said I'm taking him in hospital so I can get hernia done and from that he's going to a good nursing home which you would approve of.

Mmm.

So I knew I wasn't leaving me Dad, on his own in the house, so.

And how old was he at that time?

Ah about 82. Yeah about 82. He lived to be 90.

So he was a lot older, your father?

Pardon.

Well, you were 21 then?

Oh no, no, no. No I was 21 when me mother died; the day after she would have celebrated her 57th birthday, the day after she died.

Mmm.

No, no, he would have been about 58 at the time, me Dad but ...

So did you marry late?

Yes. Well I married. Well I was engaged, when I was 21. I was engaged. He was in the air force. And my Dad good to [inaudible] but he never really liked him. Thought he was a bit too flowing with fancy talk with me, you know.

Laughs.

He used to say oh my darling, my beautiful flower and all and me beautiful dark eyed beauty and me Dad you know, my god, he'd say why don't you say I love you and have done with it. He said that a thousand times you know but ...

Laughs.

I did get engaged to 'im. And I 'ad a friend who was engaged to another airman but he was a Canadian and 'e was a nice man, John. His name was John. John, I forgot his surname now, but 'e was a Canadian and he used to say to my friend, [name deleted], [Name deleted] doesn't think [name deleted], [name deleted] 'is name was. Doesn't think 'e's good enough for Mabs. 'E tells some terrible lies and 'e's told Mabs e's, e's saving up for a house of their own for when the war's over and 'e's drinking and e's gambling.

Oohh.

So anyway me Dad said to me, he said, I don't know why you got engaged to him Mabs. He said e's not for you really. He said I'm a pretty good judge of character. Anyway I was engaged for two years and then 'e come home on one leave and asked me Mum and Dad and I was saying afterwards, I said after the war's over, there's no need really for you to look for a house. We can live here. We 'ad a lovely 'ouse we did in [inaudible]. I've got some pictures out there of where we lived, in a big corner house it was right near to everything and, nice bathroom, big lounge and everything. I said me Dad said we can stay and we can have our own room, I said. And 'e said no way, I'm not 'aving that 'e said. I'm not 'aving that. I said what do you mean and 'e said I don't believe in living with your family because he said it never works out.

And so I said, I'm sorry you feel like that. I said by the way, I said 'ow much money are you saving? I was working; I was at work in the munitions ten hours a day and twelve hours at night. It was 'ard work and I always put something in the post office then at that time.

Mmm.

And he said ooh I'm saving, I am saving luv; I'm saving a lot. I said 'ave you any proof. 'E said what's all, what's all this about and I said well I've heard different. I said from a friend? And 'e said don't tell me that [name deleted] has been telling tales about me.

Laughs

He said 'e never did like me so I said, well no but is it true that you've been spending a lot of money on drinking and gambling and 'e said, so what, he said. So, I said I think I'd rather not marry you

Mmm-mmm.

And 'e said why. No I said, I said when I marry somebody I can at least choose a man who I can believe in being honest and I said, I've been trying to save and I want to stay with my Dad now I said, because e'll be on 'is own if I get married and go away, he'll be totally on 'is own then. So 'e said, oh well if that's the way you feel about it but 'e said, but you're losing a good man, 'e said [laughs].

Laughs.

Anyway I said I'll give you your ring back. 'E said no you can keep it to remember me by.

Laughs.

So 'e wouldn't take the ring back but me Dad was pleased.

Mmm.

'E said I'm sorry love you've lost 'im 'e said but 'e wasn't the right man for you. You deserve better, 'E said at least you deserve an honest hard workingman, so that was that. So I said that finished 'im, then I said to my sisters you know, I said I'll never trust another man again and they said oh you'll get over it.

And then after the war I went working in sweet factory and my friend, [name deleted], we'd been on munitions together, and I encouraged 'er to go out with a man who was working at the factory. He were very fond of [name deleted] but she wouldn't go out with 'im because he drank and her father drank and used to knock her mother about so anyway I got them going out together, so they got married and I went to their wedding and she come to see me one day and she said, Mabs, she said I've been invited to me cousin's wedding, so she said a week on Saturday. So I said yeah, so what and she said my mother wants us to invite you. Oh I said no, I won't know anybody. She said no we want you to come. So anyway my family said, oh you 'aven't been to anything for a long while.

[Talking about when she met her husband.] I went to this wedding and who should be the best man but [name deleted] and e'd been a paratrooper during the war, [name deleted], and this man 'ad been a paratrooper and apparently [name deleted] 'ad helped save this chap. They'd been in a big jump and anyway they'd come down somewhere and it was very dangerous and 'e got 'im to some safety. And 'e said I'll never forget it [name deleted] and if I find the right girl and marry 'er, you're going to be me best man and that's 'ow it worked out and I was saying to [name deleted], I say a big fine upstanding nice young man, a handsome man there. She said, do you want me to introduce 'im and I said, no, I said no he wouldn't be interested in me.

Anyway afterwards 'e came over to me later on. The groom came and spoke to me and then 'e come over and 'e said 'ullo, 'ullo. Are you alone? I said yes. 'E said well where's your boyfriend and I said don't talk to me about boyfriends and 'e said, where do you live. Are you [name deleted]'s friend and I said yes but I don't know any of that family though, that cousin I don't know any of them and 'e said where do you live and I said not far away and I said where've you come from, oh I've come from Liverpool. 'E said I'm staying the weekend because it's too much for me going back. So 'e said would you like me to get you a drink and so 'e got me a drink and started talking and 'e kept looking at me. Has anybody ever told you what beautiful eyes you've got? Oh don't I said, oh please don't start saying lovely things

[laughing]. Anyway I said are you going back today, I said Liverpool. I said, Liverpool, I said I've never been there actually. I said I only know the Beatles (laughs) from Liverpool. Anyway he said do you live on your own and I said no I look after my father, lost my mother and me and my Dad live together and 'e said oh that's very good. Do you work? I said yeah. He said I'm asking too many questions 'e said, aren't I. I said yes [laughs]. Anyway 'e said are you free tomorrow? I said no, not really I said I 'ave to do some 'ousework Sunday morning because of working all week. 'E said, are you free in the afternoon. I said well I think I could be. 'E said well do you think you could meet me and show me around [name of town deleted]? I said all right we could go to the park. It's a very nice park. So I met im and then 'e said is it all right if I write to you, can you give me your address. Can I take you to my home? Anyway 'e started writing to me. He kept on writing and I kept on answering and me Dad said for goodness sake, invite the man to come over 'e said, invite the man to come over. [Name deleted] said I'm longing to see your Dad 'e said because 'is father died when 'e was only three. 'E 'ad no father. Any way that weekend 'e said if we can meet and click together then take me 'ome to see your Dad, I'd love it, and Dad took to 'im right away. Ain't it funny?

So how old were you then?

Ah I was 27 I think, 27. Mmm, should be yeah. I was 25 when the war was over.

So you lived somewhere in London, like a suburb of London?

No, no. I was in Manchester.

Piccadilly. So there's a Piccadilly in Manchester as well?

Oh yeah Piccadilly in Manchester. Sorry, you don't know much.

No I don't know.

Anyway as I say 'e kept writing to me and 'e lived with 'is mother and 'is Auntie [name deleted] and 'e said they'd like you to come and spend the weekend and, and they want to see you, you know. And uh 'is mother was very much like [name deleted], very stubborn. You know but he was all right but I 'ad a feeling she didn't really like me very much but Auntie [name deleted], 'is Auntie [name deleted] took to me right away and we got on well and then [name deleted] kept saying 'e wanted to settle down. And I said yeah well I said; yes find yourself a nice girl from Liverpool then.

Laughs.

No, no, no, no. 'E said I know it's too soon to say 'e said but I'd love to marry you. I said oohh!

Eh, I'd love to marry you, I said you 'ardly know me. I said we've only met about four times. No. I'd love you to marry me he said. When you come, next time you come when visit my brother, [name

deleted], at his home in Kirby. I said all right. I said 'e got married very young as soon as the war was over he got married very young, they 'ad three boys. So I went over and we clicked just like that, me and [name deleted] and [name deleted]. They took to me right away. They said to [name deleted], where d' you find 'er. She's too good for you. [Laughs.] But, anyway they liked me, so at Christmas time, after me Mum died I always went to me sister, [name deleted], down in Gorton, Manchester. I always went to her for Christmas day, me Dad and I. So 'e said would you like to spend Christmas with us. I said no. I said I always to be with me sisters, me and me Dad. He said oh well, will you spend New Year with us, so I said all right then. I said who's asking me. 'E said I'm asking you. 'E said I run that house. [Laughs.] No he said, I help look after Aunty [name deleted] and me mother by working. If I meet you at the station will you come and stay two or three days. 'E said and in that time I'm going to ask you something.

[Laughs.] Oh.

Would I marry 'im?

The following weekend he come back to Manchester to see me Dad, to ask me Dad. He said I know it's an old fashioned thing but 'ave I got permission to marry Mabs. 'E said you certainly 'ave, boy. You certainly 'ave.

Mmm.

He said well when Mabs and I marry can I call you Dad. He said no, no 'e said I've got, I've got a son and three daughters and they all call me Dad. 'E said you can call me [name deleted] if you like. That was me Dad's name.

You can call me [name deleted] but you can't call me Dad. 'E said well I'm a bit closer so you'll be it. He said it will be lovely 'aving a father. He said well you can consider myself your father if you like lad 'e said but 'e said you're the right one for my girl and that's what I wanted 'e said. 'E said well people at work used to call me honest [name deleted], so I'll help. So well we got engaged in the New Year and we got married on Easter Saturday.

Mmm.

That year so that was that.

So when did you come to Australia?

Nineteen sixty-seven.

So you'd been together quite a while before you came here.

Pardon. Oh yes, yes we'd been together quite a long time because I love children as I said to one of them at, [name deleted], *when I were a little girl, everybody who 'ad a new baby I was out knocking on the door can I wheel your baby in the pram, you know.*

Oh.

And now you say to somebody when I get married I'm going to 'ave four children. I'm going to 'ave two boys and two girls. [Laughs.] But funnily enough we were married a long while, ah I couldn't get pregnant, you know.

Mmm, so you had [son's name deleted] late did you?

Yes, yes. I did.

Was he born here?

Oh no he was three when we come over. [Husband's name deleted] came over and they, felt [inaudible] in August and [husband's name deleted] paid 'is own fare and came over in the September and I said I'm not coming unless you find a 'ouse and a job. I'm not going to be dependent on Australia but you know so 'e come over. [Husband's name deleted] went, came over in the August, in September, that's right. We 'ad a party for [son's name deleted] when 'e was three and then the following, the, what's the name of the organisation that I could come out, only if [husband's name deleted] had got a job and a home for me so January 'e wrote to say 'e got a job, a proper job, and 'e got a nice house and uh...

Where was that?

We 'ad, pardon?

Where was that?

That; that was in West Australia. West Australia and so we 'ad, [son's name deleted] and I 'ad to go and 'ave a check up to make sure we were in good health.

Mmm.

Because of your chest, x-rays and that.

Mmm.

And [son's name deleted] was always a good little boy, a good baby and a good little boy and very appreciative, very mature

Mmm.

And he kept telling everybody he was going to Australia but I think he thought it was only like a bus ride.

Laughs.

Going to my [husband's name deleted], [husband's name deleted] always insisted on 'im calling 'im father but I didn't like that. Maybe that's one thing I didn't like and he liked me being called mother and 'im being called father, you know I want respect from my child, you know. Anyway to cut a long story short, [husband's name deleted] come out and then [son's name deleted] and I came out in the March the following year, on our own. [Husband's name deleted]'s Aunty [name deleted], all my family came to the railway station at twelve o'clock at night. We got the midnight train

Mmm.

And it's ... I didn't know London at all and Aunty [name deleted] come with me and we bought a ticket [inaudible] and all my family were seeing me off and we were all there and I was crying. And (my son) said, what are you crying for Mum are we going there on our holiday? I said no we're going there for the rest of our lives. Well don't cry love, don't cry, you'll soon come back. [Laughs.]

Laughs.

Anyway we got to London and then Aunty [name deleted] said we'll 'ave to get the underground here Mabs, so uh...

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 16

Now ...

A bit embarrassing for you ...

Well, I'm used to it now. I've done it ...

Not for me but ...

No, I don't find ...

No, well you're used to it that's why.

I'm getting used to it. Do you find ... Do you think it'll worry you?

No, not in the least, nothing'll upset me.

So you're no longer self-conscious then? [Laughs.]

No, not at all.

I think it comes with maturity.

Yes that's right.

Yeah and I find you just forget about it [the tape recorder] after a while.

Yes of course you do.

And my main aim for me is not to talk too much myself so that I don't waste the tape. So I hear what you have to say on the tape.

Yes.

So, I hope I've prepared you; they're all easy questions. How long have you lived here?

[Phone rings.] Ooh. I'll have to turn it off. [Turns tape off.]

So you were going to say, you were going to tell me how long you had lived here.

I didn't hear that. Excuse me, more interruptions. [Inaudible.] Is it off?

No it's going. How long have you lived here?

In this, probably 59 years, in this house.

This is the longest of anyone I've interviewed so far.

Really.

Oh yeah, I've had 50.

We built it. It's a big place, high ceiling; cold in the winter.

Ah, so you built it yourself, so that must been, 59 years? This is 2003. It must have been just after the war.

It was.

'46.

He didn't go to the war.

And, where did you live before you lived here?

I was renting a house in [name deleted] Street. Yes, my husband and I. And then uh, we looked all over [name of suburb deleted] and out this way for a block that was elevated so he could put a jolly workshop underneath and a garage, and he got it.

Mmm.

Two and a half years it took to build this.

Mmm, and was he working on it full time.

No. He was a shipwright while the war was on, that's right, and over there at the back I don't know what they call it. What's the name of the place over there; that big place where all the boats come up. And they built the boats over there; the boats were to go up to New Guinea.

Oh.

It was a shipbuilding ... not the Cat as it is now.

So now where Incat is?

Yes. Somewhere near that, yes.

Yeah, I don't know is that Cornelian Bay or ...

Or, I don't know what they called it. It's changed its' name anyway. But he died a45.

Mmm, so you've been here, you've been on your own a long time.

Mmm. Heart attack of course. And I had the five boys. The eldest one 15 and I had to put me best foot forward and rear them.

Mmm, it must have been really hard.

Ah, pardon.

It must have been hard, especially in those days.

Oh shocking, shocking, yes. Yes I mean, clothes were a lot. Clothes wise I had to buy them at Street Vincent de Paul, you know to help myself out.

It wasn't the done thing in those days but then everyone does it now.

Everyone does it now, yes. But uh, that's how I reared them.

Mmm, so did you have to work?

Too right! I mean Mum was here. That was for when they was coming back from school. You know somebody was in the house. Not like the key kids today. So there was three at school.

And so was your Mum living here with you?

Yes. Yes. Am I being whatsernamed now, what I'm talking about now?

What? You can talk about whatever you like but, this is interesting. It is all a part of the history of this house.

Yes, that's right. Oh, it was a real problem really you know to get the block because he wanted the elevated land.

Yeah, well it's a good area because it's only just above the level bit.

Oh it's lovely. Close to the shops, very good neighbours; very good neighbours; very helpful to one another. We look after one another's houses if they go away for holidays and things like that.

So have a lot of the people been here a long time?

Well to tell you the truth this street has been turned inside out twice.

But you've seen it through.

I'm the only one and that one over there that's been here all these years. That's [name deleted]'s you know over there.

So who lives over there?

[Name deleted]'s.

Is that still a family there?

Well the kids have grown up. They're still there. They're healthy. He's 83 and she's 80, oh, in July.

That's the couple who own the house?

Yes, yes, so this is a retired, really a retired street.

Mmm, so most people here are retired.

Yes.

Mmm, so you've got a little community almost.

Well that's right but they don't go out in the evening, mainly stay indoors when it's cold, like I do. And uh I used to drive a lot, but uh I gave that up when I turned 80 because I think, any woman, I hope this is not [inaudible], should be off the road at 80.

Laughs.

[Laughs.] *I told me doctor that and he just laughed and said no not all.*

Not all?

Not all, he said.

Mmm, oh well I suppose he must know some. But people do get slower driving when they're older

Oh of course they do, yes.

Some people are very impatient about that.

This is the trouble, especially the men.

Mmm, yes, I know some who are like that, yeah.

That's right. Though I've had no accidents in 46 years anyhow because I've done what I was supposed to do in traffic.

Mmm, so you've avoided any risk of that by stopping ...

Pardon.

You've avoided any risk of that by stopping, as you got older.

Yes, I took my licence into give it in, at 80. Though I got a lovely letter back from Transport for being a, a successful driver for all those years without an accident.

Mmm.

And I got one from the RACT too.

Mmm, so that's a pretty nice thing.

Yeah it was.

But I suppose for you living here, I mean, how do you manage now without a car?

Oh taxis or friends, a friend, friends.

Oh you've got people to take you shopping.

Oh no, I get a taxi. I'm being independent.

Laughs.

Very.

So you go out with friends but ...

Oh no, not very much [pause] really [pause] but wherever you go you've got to pay for everything anyway, you know. People haven't got it at my age.

Mmm.

Oh well, pensioners.

Yes, so you've got to be careful.

I have to.

So what about your sons?

I've got five sons. One's in Tasmania, and the other four live in Queensland and they've all got their own homes.

Mmm.

Haven't they done well!

Yes.

Mmm. Well they're all builders you see.

Ah.

You see there's four generations of builders in the family.

So your husband, his father ...

And his father.

Oh and ...

And my husband's sons; that makes the four.

Oh I see.

The eldest is a manager of, he's just been made a manager, what's his name over here, he's a manager of, what's the people's name, buildings, existing buildings.

In Queensland?

No over here. That man lives over here. See he was the only one born here and he's recently been made manager, he manages all the buildings that's going up at the present time. He can't do them all at once of course so he does so many a month. He's building one now for [name deleted]; what else is called [name deleted], [name deleted] ...

Yeah.

A great big place down at [name deleted], a place for the crowd from Sydney who's come over to [name deleted]. You know how well off they are. [Laughs.]

So these are houses?

Yeah.

[Further conversation about this deleted.]

Oh yeah.

Yeah. So he's a [name deleted] of course?

I don't know about yeah that name. He's a [name deleted].

Oh yeah. He'd have to be. [Laughs.] I didn't marry twice.

Laughs.

No, no. Who'd want you with five sons anyhow? [Laughs.]

Yeah there's probably something in that.

Yeah there is something in that. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] So does he do much to help you?

Oh yes. He lives over in [name deleted] Street near the swimming pool for kids, the school.

Mmm.

He's got his own home over there. He's married and he's got a son and a daughter.

Mmm.

And the wife works. I mean that makes it. They can get a few dollars together and they're going to go on a nice trip, when the time comes.

So the kids are at home are they?

No. They're 32 you know, and, and 35.

So they have left home.

Oh yes.

Have they got families?

No. They're so up to date. They don't do that nowadays. [Laughs.]

[Further conversation about this deleted.]

Laughs.

My mother had red hair but the boys have got red hair.

Oh, all of them?

Ah, except one. He's a stray isn't he? [Laughs.]

I love redheaded children.

Yes I was a bit gingery going to school and the kids called me freckles and ginger. Oh they used to run around me.

[Laughs.] But you like it. [Laughs.]

Oh I didn't mind.

You like the hair.

Yeah that's right. Yours is a bit on the auburny anyhow.

Well, it's not particularly natural.

Well we all do that I know. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

It suits you.

Yeah. And so, what's your son's name who lives here again?

That's here. [Name deleted.]

[Name deleted], and, so how often do you see [name deleted]?

Oh, as often as he can. Like, you see he's driving right the way down to [name of suburb deleted] every morning at half past five for this job to get the men working.

Mmm.

Oh and the day's taken up by the time, by the time they knock off at four and he gets up here, it's an hour's drive, in traffic.

Mmm.

It wouldn't be if there wasn't any traffic about.

Mmm.

And he pops in. He was here yesterday ... and rings.

Mmm.

And he said, how are you? And he knows straight away if I wasn't any good.

Mmm.

Yes. He's got my phone number and I've got his, literally.

So he works for a construction company?

Yes.

A big one?

Fairly big, yes. I'm trying to think of the man's name. Not [name deleted] but something like that. [name deleted]'s constructions. That's right.

So he's the construction foreman.

Yes, for the lot, yes.

So when you moved in here, you were a young person and just about to start a family. Is that what brought you here?

What was that? Well all the [name deleted]'s must have their own home because they were builders of course.

Yeah.

So, we decided we'd buy this. Do you know how much this block was?

I'd love to know.

A hundred pounds! I couldn't believe it.

In those days I suppose that was a reasonable price.

It was a reasonable price but today they're 35 and 45.

Thousand?

Mmm, so it's in a good vicinity, as you said.

I think the values have been going up in these particular areas.

Oh they are, yes.

Where it's handy to transport and the shops.

Definitely, mmm.

It's a very good location.

Mmm, yeah oh I wouldn't like to move. I'll have to one day I suppose. The house will be sold and divided between the five boys. One of them wants to buy it and I said you wouldn't have enough money to buy it [laughs]; he said well if I sell my own he will.

So as the family home it means a lot to him.

To me, because I more or less worked me heart out when we built the damn thing.

So which one wants to buy it? One of the one's in Queensland?

[Name deleted], *he's in Brisbane. The Sunshine Coast.*

That's very sweet of him.

It is really, yeah.

And so how many bedrooms does it have?

This here? Four, two doubles and two singles.

Mmm.

It's wicked you know because I mean I often think of people who haven't got a home and there's all these bedrooms but you couldn't take anybody in.

No it's very hard to really.

Not at my age. I've tried it.

Oh so what, you had a boarder at one stage?

No, a girl. I brought her in to give her a, to start her off in life.

Yeah.

And she used to bring her boyfriends in, so that finished that. I won't have that.

Yeah. So how old was she?

Oh, about 19 or 20.

And was she working?

Yes. She was working for [name deleted] but of course that is the in thing isn't it? They've got to have friends.

And yes, even if your own children do it, you don't really want that in your own home.

No you don't.

No, that's right.

Because we were brought up very strict you know, although I come from the country. You know where Southport is?

Yes.

Well I come from there. You know where the wharf is? That's the jetty.

Yeah.

Well you turn left and you go right out four miles into the bush, to [name deleted]. That's where I was reared.

Was that on a farm?

No that's sawmills. My father was a mail contractor but that didn't stop us. We still had to walk four miles to school and four miles back. Of course those were the days and now they drop them right on the doorstep.

Mmm. So what sort of contractor was he?

Mail contractor.

So what does that mean?

Horse and cart. Oh well I'll tell you. [Name of town deleted] was the centre, central down there. All the mails from Hobart were dumped at [name of town deleted] Post Office.

Mmm-mmm.

And my Dad, he had to collect those mailbags and deliver them to Hastings, Catamaran, Cockle Creek, Southport and Cloudy Bay.

Mmm.

That was his job in those days, in a horse and trap.

Oh.

Poor old fella.

Mmm, well that's a long way to walk to school every day.

Oh it was. Well I've had both hips done.

Recently?

About three years ago. That's why I'm sitting on three cushions.

Because they're soft.

Mmm, but I mean I used to get very tired. I remember I was a good child and very tired and the others, you know I had a job to catch up to them.

Huh.

There were about ten of us at [name deleted] School and it got closed.

So only ten went to the school?

Only ten went to that school and of course they had to close it because of course, the government have got to have at least 16 to 18 of them, to make it pay anyway.

So a lot of those small schools have gone haven't they?

Yes it's what you call a, not a facility, well you know. I just can't think of the word for the moment. It's not a school [inaudible], I don't call it, because they put everybody in the one class [laughs]. That's a joke isn't it?

[Laughs.] Well I don't know I mean, it depends on how they structure the teaching

Well that's right yes.

And the children can help each other.

That's exactly right too, put an eight year old with a 12, what do you think of that.

Yeah, it'd be a very busy job for the teacher.

Oh the poor teacher. But anyway, we learnt.

Mmm.

I went to another school later on of course.

Mmm, so which one was that?

My school?

Yeah.

I come to town and I went to [name of school deleted]'s.

Oh.

The top, to keep it up you know. Real envy of schooling in those days, otherwise you'd get nowhere.

So you were a boarder?

Eh?

You were a boarder?

No, Mum lived up here then.

Mmm, so she moved up?

Yes she moved up. There was nothing down there for anybody. Of course it's all opened up down there now, pretty good for everybody.

Mmm, so she came up here so you could go to school.

More or less. I wasn't the only one. There was five of us. Uh, two girls and three boys, mmm.

Oh in the family.

In the family.

And where did you come?

Last.

The youngest.

[Laughs.] *Ah dear. We were all right; used to have a few fights of course. All families do.* [Laughs.]

So before you moved here you were already married?

I've got to think back. It was a long time ago. Yes. Oh I got married up here. I got married, like I came up here from down there, say at about 16, with the kids. And then she put us through school where we could have a little more schooling to get us our jobs what we might be going to do.

Mmm.

And the whole lot of us had to do that, schools weren't what they are today, as you would know; just the tail end of it, so you could fit in another certificate or something.

Mmm.

You don't get much of a chance in the country you know when they put everybody in the one class, from eight years old to 12. [Laughs.]

Yes.

It's a real joke.

Yes, out of that into the academic stream.

Yes. It's dreadful. And so I had another half year.

So you came up here at 16?

Yeah I been at 16 and then I went straight off to work at 17.

And so you were courting some time and you were engaged and got married?

Yes, well I met my husband at [name of suburb deleted] [laughs] at the [name deleted] School.

Oh, so you were doing what?

I was nursing at the Royal then, just to see how I'd like it and the girls down there said we're having a big ball at the City Hall, do you want to come.

Mmm.

I said no thanks. You see a lot of the girls used to go up to the Tech because it was just next door to the home, the nurses' home down in Campbell Street.

Yeah, mmm.

And I met [name deleted] there.

Mmm, so he was a bit older than you.

No, no.

A similar age.

It wasn't that much. He was 45 when he died.

And he was about 30 [when you met him].

Yes, yes

So was he ten or more years older?

Not really no, about four.

So you didn't get married straight away.

No, oh no, later on, later on.

Oh, so you knew him a long time.

Couldn't find anybody. [Laughs.]

Ah huh. Well you found him.

That's right.

So you did nursing?

Yeah. I didn't go right through. No I didn't go right through.

Mmm, so was there any reason for that.

Pardon.

Was there any reason why you didn't go right through?

Didn't like it.

Oh right. So then you got something else.

Oh plenty of work yes. I can do anything. I can really cook. About five or six years ago for Mr and Mrs [name deleted] chose me to do that. That was nothing really I'd cook them a big dinner for themselves.

So five years ago you did that?

No not five years ago, about ten. I did a bit of work after he died.

Mmm, so what work were you doing when you were raising your boys after he died?

Oh I done domestic and all that sort thing, you know.

Mmm, so you were doing it in people's homes.

Yes, elderly people especially.

Mmm.

All along, that's what I said, at ten years of age I was interested in older people.

Mmm, they teach you a lot I think.

Oh, of course they do.

And so what do you like about living here? You've told me some things.

Here? Oh I like it because it's close to everything, to the business area and I've got a lovely view and I wouldn't part with that for quids.

Mmm.

And at night when it's all lit up it's absolutely beautiful [identifying information deleted].

Oh is it?

Behind that big pine tree they've got lights really high and they're all lit up, Tuesdays and Thursday nights. [Identifying information deleted.]

Across here?

Yes.

I can see it.

Well if I lower me pillow you know I've got to put the blinds down because the dashed lights are in my eyes. But it's a lovely place to live up here. Everybody's you know; this more or less chatty business when ever you want.

I like the sound of your street.

[Name deleted]?

No, I like the fact that you've got friendly neighbours here that are retired and that people look out for each other's place.

Yes. I'll tell you something. An old lady lived in there and she was 86. She sold out recently and I've got two young ones in there both 24. They go to work so that's all right. And on this side that old lady sold and I've got two more young ones there. So I've made myself known to them and they're very, very nice. And he and his wife works in a bank

Mmm

But I don't know where those two, I know her father's at Cadbury's so she'd get plenty of chocolates.

So they're both buying their houses.

Yes. So that's two new neighbours each side but they've got the old girl in here in the middle.

[Laughs.]

Laughs.

I warned them about that. I said, you'll get on all right with me. I said I like young people, and I do it too.

But they don't have children.

Not yet. They've got dogs instead. Some of them don't you know, don't want them.

There's more and more, there's a very high proportion of young people don't have children at all;

They don't

I think it's about a third.

It's a shame really. I mean it's bound to make things bad in years to come.

Mmm, but it's hard to know what it's going to be like but I think perhaps people will value children more, after all there'll be fewer of them around, you'd think that they would.

I wouldn't be without mine. I've got four grandchildren. I've got two grandsons and two granddaughters.

And that's all.

That's all. The others don't have any children.

Yes.

They work of course and that's why I suppose.

Yeah and it's hard to do both.

That's only those two. There's dozens of those around but they want to work.

And you don't have any great grandchildren.

Oh not yet. Well I should have, I'm in my 88th year.

And your grand children are very old aren't they?

Well I've got to think about that. One's 26. He's in England. And one's 35. He's on the mainland too. And the two girls of course they still work, [name deleted] has just started, she's only just left school, 17, she's gone into a place where they have all their exercises and stuff like that. You know we've got one here on the wharf too.

A gym?

Yes, and she's just nearly 17 and she's just started work as a, out the front office. I think she'll be all right. And the other one, uh she's married. That's [name deleted]. And there's only the four.

How old's [name deleted]?

[Name deleted]'s 30, *yeah. So I mean it's about time you know. [Laughs.] But there it is, as you said and I say, it's the way of the world today.*

Yeah, it is.

It's a wicked world you know. It's not the world.

Well there are some terrible things happening in certain parts of the world.

Ah yes, and that war, it shouldn't have ever been started. I shouldn't speak about it.

It's a terrible thing.

Terrible damn thing.

Yes I didn't think we would have wars like that anymore.

No, that's all got to be built up again you know. You know, you wonder.

Mmm, but I mean it's not so bad in Tasmania.

Oh know we're pretty well off down here. They call us the, what do they call us, the gem hanging off Australia.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

Yes I think it's one of the best places in the world.

Yes. I've been all the way around Australia but Darwin. I don't want to go up there because it's too hot and I couldn't stand the heat. But I found that this place is a wonderful little place alongside all of those others. I go up the Gold Coast quite a bit.

Mmm.

I'm sick of going up there now. I don't like the traffic. They run over the top of you. They're dreadful.

So you fly up there do you?

I went up on my own once but never again. I'd never been before by myself and you've got to know where you're going.

So how would you get up there now?

I don't want to go anymore. I've been up about six or seven times.

Mmm.

But that, [name deleted], he was down, that's that one there, he was here for a fortnight about a month ago. He wanted me to get rid of this house and go up there to live. He said there's four granny flats up there for you. He's such a fool.

He sounds nice.

He does a bit of singing [inaudible] for the football crowd. He's a hairdresser. He's got his own business.

Mmm.

Yes.

So have you been up with [name deleted]? Did he come and get you and take you up?

The last time I went up by myself and I'll never go again. No I'm not going up anymore.

But you have been up, like the other times you went up with them?

Yes, yes, but it's very lonely by yourself. You sit there on the plane and uh, I suppose you've been through that before, and no one'll speak to you.

Oh sometimes they will.

Yes, well I've never struck it, well mostly men so I'd never expect them to do that; old fellas.

Mmm.

With a beard. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Yeah, well most of my family are in Sydney and I've done a bit of travelling. My [other] two both live there. But sometimes I have good conversations with people.

Oh that's good.

Yeah, but I don't always. Some people just don't want to talk.

No. They just read a book don't they?

Yeah.

I find that the really young ones, about 17 to 20; they get into the book and they'll be in the book until they gets there.

Yeah.

I wonder why they don't. Well it's another world isn't it?

The way people live now.

Yes it's all together different.

So you feel safe living here?

Safe?

Yeah.

Absolutely.

Well you must be, with so many good neighbours.

Yes they are a nice lot of people. They really are. Well another family arrived and I haven't really got to know them yet but, they're already having conversations they are. So if there's one of them out there I just go and talk to whoever it is.

So you talk to your other neighbours?

Oh yes. I've known all those for years.

So do you go in and out of each other's places?

No. Nobody does that.

Oh.

Oh it's a good way to be, but when then again, it's nice to have a talk sometimes.

Mmm.

No I'm not isolated from anybody but they're just all sort of new. As I said, although we might have had an elderly persons' street until about four years ago now, we're getting all the new ones again. It does that you know, vicinities.

Mmm.

When I moved in there were 45 kids in this street.

Uh.

They were all young people with families.

Mmm.

Now they all either went to work or got married and moved out. They're all gone and I've never seen them again.

Mmm.

Now there's a new lot in and then there's another new lot here on top of that.

Mmm, so the new lot before these young people, what ages are they?

Oh about my own, getting old.

I was wondering if most of the ones your age would've moved out and perhaps the ones that moved in, because you said that most were retired.

Retired or gone into homes, those older ones.

But the ones who live here a lot of them are retired now?

Oh yes they are but that is sick people, you know. A lot of them have been ill, you know sisters come in and nurses. It's very sad. Two or three cases of dementia around

Mmm, still living at home.

And that's a very sad thing it is.

Mmm, so they're still at home though with dementia.

Yes but uh they've got daughters. They come and see them and they get meals on wheels. But one of them of the two elderly ones, one's all right and the other one's not, do you get what I mean. One's a dementia.

Oh it's a couple.

Yes. It's very sad. They're a good age too, 86, but that uh, doesn't strike everybody thank god.

They're predicting that there'll be a big increase with the increase in the elderly population but.

Yes, that's right.

I think there's things you can do if you uh, keep physically active and if you have a good diet and plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables well then.

Exactly.

Yeah.

Well I work all the time. I'm out in the garden and I go down to the bank and pay all me debts, they all come in and you know you can pay them at the post office.

Mmm.

I make the one trip down in the taxi, do the whole lot. You know what comes in. You've got a home.

Rates and electricity.

Rates and electricity and the phone; I've got a home one. I get that every month.

I'm getting it every month too.

I put everybody onto it here because it's easier to pay.

It gets too big.

Oh gosh over \$300 some people pay. But your phone is half your, you know friendship. What, if you want to meet somebody or they want to meet you.

It's important to have it.

It is. Most important especially for doctors and that, if they've got to be running to the doctors they put you on medication and sometimes it's got to do for six months. That's because I've got a heart condition because it's worn out I suppose.

So you're on medication?

Just that, yes.

So do you know what it is?

Yes.

What is it?

The medication is diroxin.

Oh yeah, I've heard of that.

Yeah well everybody takes that. [Inaudible] I'm wondering if they give me the right one but I'm taking a little white one with it.

So is this to do with your blood pressure?

Yes oh the life I've got, [inaudible] you know things aren't easy. We'll get our rates again next week. [Laughs.] Those sort of things worry you a bit you know.

The cost of them, especially rates cos they keep going up.

Don't they [in a whisper]. But of course me being a pensioner, I get a cut.

So what's the cut?

Instead of it being a little over a thousand I get it for eight fifty.

Mmm.

It's pretty good.

I've heard some people say they don't think it's enough.

Well I'm satisfied.

Mmm.

You've got to be a good, what do you call it; a good saver and be able to do things and not spend too much.

Yeah, not everyone does do that.

No not everyone does it. They just go out and they try that on.

And some people are too much of a soft touch for their kids, I think.

Oh yes, little old grannies.

I know people who've got into financial trouble, pensioners.

Of course. Did you hear about what happened in yesterday's Sun isn't it?

No.

Yesterday morning. Well they have a home up the street up there in [name of nursing home deleted]. Well I had a lady in there just for a fortnight.

A friend of yours?

Yes, yes.

And you were visiting her.

Yes, and she came out visiting to home and she rang me. She said [name deleted] I have some important news for you. I said whatever is it? She said this morning at eight o'clock while everybody was 'aving their breakfast, there's quite a few up there, somebody robbed all their lockers.

Oh.

Somebody that knows the place.

Mmm.

Must've been somebody that knows the place and knew their whereabouts and their movements.

What did they take?

Their bags with their moneys in it and all those sort of things old people put in their drawer you know, or locker, but they haven't gotten to anybody yet but they won't let them, let it out yet, the police won't.

That's a terrible thing.

Shocking damn thing.

Mmm, they'll certainly be improving the security there I'd definitely think.

Yes, well it must be somebody that knew exactly where to go.

So someone perhaps who'd done some work there or visited somebody there.

Yes. That's right, somebody that used to work there. It could be man, woman or child, you wouldn't know.

I hope that they get the person.

It hasn't been on the news yet.

Mmm.

They keep those things quiet don't they for a while.

The head of there, that's [name deleted], isn't it, [name deleted]?

Yes. It's a very nice home. They've got a lot of people there.

Mmm.

They've not quite finished the new part yet. She told me that.

So what do you think of places like that? Would you think of, you know...

What do you mean?

Well for yourself, would you like to live in a place like that?

No I'll stop here as long as I possibly can because when the time comes and it's your duty to go, go 'cos you can't put all the responsibility onto one child. You see half of mine are up at the Gold Coast but they're very good. [Name deleted] came down to see me a fortnight ago and did the chores around the place that needs a man to do.

Mmm.

For me birthday you know and he said, what'd you like for your birthday. I said oh I don't know [name deleted] so he went out and brought me home a new set of steel pots you know, pans and all.

Laughs.

He went to one of the shops and got it. He said I can see what you've got in there and he said you've had them here since I was a hero in the kid's seven.

Laughs.

And I said get out of my kitchen.

Laughs.

I thought it was very nice of him really and he didn't get it for a song either.

Mmm, that is nice. So you like your neighbours clearly?

Oh yes I get on with anybody.

Mmm.

And they all like me too. They tell me so but I won't look behind me back what they say behind me back I don't know. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

I'm that type of person, happy go lucky and I'll do any mortal thing for anybody even if I'm going to put meself out.

Mmm.

That's me make up.

So you think that means that you can get on with other people?

Yes, I think so. This catty business I mean it doesn't get you anywhere.

No.

No.

Gossiping about people behind their back, that sort of thing.

That's right. I think it's terrible. If you've got anything to say, just say it politely. [Laughs.]

Ah. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

No-one's perfect.

No they're not

Yeah

That's for sure.

But sometimes there are things that you do need to say to people.

Oh that's right.

Like if their dog was being a nuisance or something like that.

Oh of course yes but they're around, they'll tell you. I mean if they thought you was a nuisance they'd tell you without holding it back.

What your neighbours do that too?

Oh my neighbours I can't say anything about them. See that house over there with the tile roof, we've got six Sudanese in there,

Oh.

Black people, and they're lovely people.

Mmm.

All you see is white teeth.

Laughs.

I said to the lady over the road, I said, what do you think of them and she said, Oh, I don't know. So I said one of the things you will see if you meet them in the dark, you'd see their teeth.

[Laughs.]

I don't know about much else.

So they must be renting that house.

They could be that then again, they had such a bad time, was it in Africa.

Yes, North Africa.

That, Tasmania and Sydney and all those places took so many in. I don't know how they're rated, but they've got jobs

Mmm

And tall,

Mmm, mmm

Gosh I thought our men were tall but they're six foot six some of them over there, but oh they are black.

Are they the one family?

No, I wouldn't know because when they come out from different places. Well, for one I know the churches of Hobart have helped them.

Mmm.

[Name of church deleted]'s got these people, those people got them in there and now they're in the choir and all.

So they go to your church.

Yes some of them, not all.

Mmm.

I don't know what they really are, really.

Mmm, but, so they're all adults?

Pardon.

They're all adults?

Oh yes. I saw a couple of girls going in there one day in [name deleted] College uniforms when they first moved there, but I've not seen them since so probably they've been to [name of suburb deleted]. There's a lot up there.

Mmm, I've seen them around in Macquarie Street but not really very much.

Yes, that's right.

I have seen some walking up and down Macquarie Street.

Yes, oh they're human beings aren't they?

Yes, we're all human beings.

And the children and babies are beautiful.

Mmm.

You want to take one you know and hold it.

Yes, there's very little difference between them and us, just the colour of the skin.

That's all. They're just human beings.

Yes that's exactly right.

And they're very nice if they pass you in the street they'll give you a beautiful smile. Well it is a beautiful smile with their white teeth. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *And friendly but I wouldn't know if they can talk English. I wouldn't ...*

Well a lot of them can't. That's why some of them, they like to mix with each other a lot

That's right, yes.

Because they can't speak English very well.

There's quite a few of them. I know there's some out at [name of suburb deleted] and I suppose they split the differences and put them in all different places.

Mmm.

Well nobody was against them moving here. And why should they be?

Mmm, and once that would have been different wouldn't ...

Oh yes.

So things have changed.

They'd be fighting them all the way.

But people I think have a better understanding of the troubles they've faced.

Oh yes. It used to be pretty catty once wasn't it?

Well.

I don't know if it's the word or not; it might be scared or something.

People used to think they weren't as good as them didn't they?

They did, yeah. We had black people at [name of town deleted].

Oh.

Yes

Where they aborigines?

I don't know what you call them; they were very tall they were. They weren't aborigines. No you could see them a mile off. There's quite a few of those up this way here too.

So when you were a child there were black people at [name of town deleted]?

A few; we were scared stiff of them.

Mmm.

We really were, because they were black. We were only kids, about ten and twelve.

Mmm.

Mr Louie was one and of course that name used to worry me when I went to bed.

Mmm.

I don't know where they came from or what they would be, but they were black. I'm going to make you a cup of tea.

Yes it's just about finished. [Checking the tape.] So what don't you like about living here? Is there anything you don't like?

What don't I like?

Is there anything you feel you would like to be different from how it is?

No. Oh apart from my husband dying, he died in his workshop.

Mmm.

He dropped dead just like that. It was shocking it was and I was thirty-eight.

Oh.

I didn't know what to do. I just went up to have a look at him and I said, no you're gone. He was blue.

Mmm.

Like that. There was a trained sister at that old house over there, that old English style house and, with the tile roof, it's a lovely house.

That one.

That's an English style. But she's died years and years and years after that. And I said to the little fella, how old was he, three, and he came to the garage door. And I said go over to Mr [name deleted] for me will you son, your father's sick.

Mmm.

She came over. Fortunately she wasn't at work. She said, oh no.

So you said you actually ... the little three year old went over?

Well when there are four others they come out of their shell a bit.

So which one was that?

[Name deleted.]

Mmm, that's your youngest.

Yes, he's never forgotten it.

Mmm.

Nor would he but he didn't realise what had happened. [Inaudible.] She was a very good person to me.

So you've got that memory here in the house?

Yes I have but it doesn't worry me, at all. Uh other people say they'd move but you can't do that.

Well it would have been hard for you with all your children at home.

Well that's right. This house was built and paid for by then.

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 17

How long have you lived here?

What in this house? Oh crikey, ah, 42, 42 years. But 'e was a couple of weeks of age and he's 42 in May, so 42 years. We came for 18 months 52 years ago, 51 years ago.

What do you mean?

We came for 18 months and I'm the only one left. The others've all gone and I'm still 'ere all this time later.

Mmm and where did you live before you moved here?

Launceston.

Oh, so you must've come here as a fairly young person.

Twenty-five.

Mmm.

Quite a long time ago.

And what caused you to move here?

My husband. [Laughs].

[Laughs.]

No 'e'd 'ad a nasty experience at work and 'e, 'e wanted to get away from it. One of 'is cobbles was drowned and 'e was on the boat asleep and 'e reckoned 'e'd probably be, 'e'd singing out to me. And [my husband] slept like a log when 'e shut 'is eyes.

Mmm.

No that's why. He just couldn't handle it anymore; 'e 'ad a good job up there with the Marine Board with seven men under 'im, 'e 'ad a good job. And we come back down, 'e 'ad woodworking, well logs you know, cutting logs, mmm.

Mmm, so that's a big change.

Yes, yes, it was certainly a change for me, [laughs]. Yes but still you get there.

And do you like living here?

Mmm, quite like it.

And so what do you like about it?

Oh I don't know. I just feel safe, the quietness, the safeness. You see, someone said there's a unit probably available with the RSL and I thought, I don't know whether I'd want to be in that main, well it's the main street isn't it, near the police station

Mmm.

And the ambulance.

Mmm.

Oh it'd be good there next to the ambulance but I said no, I know it here.

Mmm.

The only noise I get here is possums.

[Laughs.]

Couple of them the other night, I thought the shed had gone. You never heard such a racket. I was out the back, huh, in the toilet, I might as well say where I was and I didn't like to stand up even, there was such a racket going on.

Mmm.

I thought that little back shed had gone and it was only two possums.

On the roof?

Mmm, yes I put the light on; all the lights right round the house and rang [name deleted]. I said just 'ave a look, don't come over, if there's anyone around. I don't really want to put them in danger, but I said I think there's possums, because there was that kind of shh, shh.

So this is name deleted]?

[Name deleted], [named deleted]'s, [name deleted]'s my husband's sister. Make sense? [He's her brother-in-law.]

So they've been here a while?

They've been here quite a while yes. I couldn't tell you just how long, quite a long time. Yeah.

So it must be nice living close to someone that you know?

Well.

Well.

Mmm, I say I'd reckon 10 months out of the 12 they are at Swansea.

Oh

So I'm usually pretty well on my own. Very seldom is anyone about

Mmm.

But you hear people coming up and down there and I don't worry at all. I did. I was too frightened to get up and go out the back, when [husband's name deleted], after [husband's name deleted] died because I'd never been on me own, ever. That was really the ... It was all right for a few days but then of course when everyone went ...

Mmm ...

But I'm right now. I don't mind getting up and popping out to the toilet at all but I used to and I come out one night and I could see the light under that door, oh. Anyway I thought it's no good going back to bed. I'd never get back to sleep. Anyway eventually I made meself go in there and the touch lamp was on.

Mmm.

Apparently there must've been a surge of power or something. So I've turned the, whenever I've 'ad visitors I turn the power point on and as soon as they go it's off again.

Mmm.

So I don't 'ave that worry.

So when did [husband's name deleted] die?

Seventeenth of July, '95, 1995, eight years and, next month.

[Conversation deleted.]

When you see the 17 on there, I said yes I don't forget that date.

Mmm.

Mmm.

So did it take you long to get over it and to feel safe to uh go outside? How long did that take?

I still don't go outside after ten. Don't worry. I shut meself in and I won't go out.

Mmm.

I thought I'm not having, 'cos [husband's name deleted] had the horrors so, that old man in Devonport he opened the door and somebody shot him or stabbed him or something, years and years, while he was still alive; [laughs] and 'e 'ad a gun in the corner of the bedroom there. I don't know what 'e would've done with it. 'E couldn't 'ave moved to use it. He was bed ridden for thirteen months. So yes so it took me a long time. I'm just [laughs] starting to, to realise now that 'e won't come.

Is this him?

Yes.

Ah that is lovely.

That's a good photo of him, that one.

Mmm.

The ones that 'e 'ad before he died, his sister, [name deleted], wanted me to 'ave them but oh, he looked that ill. Naturally 'e looked that ill.

He looks a happy person.

Yeah up and down.

[Conversation deleted.]

Yeah. But no it took me a long time. I still miss 'im but no, it doesn't worry me now like it used to; only occasionally. I went into Hobart with [name deleted], [name deleted].

[Conversation deleted.]

And she went in to the cemetery to 'er mother's grave and I went in and had a look at the water thing, filled it up that day and seen 'is name on the plaque. But otherwise [husband's name deleted] was buried out at the lawn cemetery.

So he was an ex-serviceman?

Yes, yes, that's why they said to me you oh, ought to come down there. They were looking for people. They said there's a couple in one of them, that ...

Oh the RSL units.

Yes that, 'e's not an ex-serviceman. I can't think who it was. Anyway someone was in one who shouldn't be, but someone's just died, haven't they?

So there's RSL homes in Huonville?

Huonville, yes.

Is there? I don't know how many there were. I knew Joan Hutchins.

And she's in one and she said, oh, you ought to put your name down. And oh I thought I don't know. I feel safe up here. I'm used to it.

[Dot: Mum lived there but she just still felt lonely.]

Yeah, oh well you still feel lonely wherever you live I think, because well I see, I don't see much of the kids because they haven't got the time I mean because they all work and they've only got the weekends for their gardens and things. So Saturdays and Sundays the worst day because I don't know why, because I know ...

Mmm.

But [name deleted] gets out occasionally, you know, fairly often. But he'll give me a ring soon and say, do I know his voice and he'll say, do you know who it is?

[Laughs.] And how many kids have you got?

I have three now. I lost one.

Mmm.

Yes, we had two girls and two boys.

Mmm. And where do they live?

[Name deleted.]

Well there's [name deleted] and [name deleted] at [name of suburb deleted]. [Name deleted]'s at [name of suburb deleted], mmm.

Mmm, right so they're not far away.

Oh no, they're not far away. They ring me fairly regularly. [Name deleted], my daughter, used to ring every night

Mmm.

You know when [husband's name deleted] first died, but they know I'm right now. Mmm, ah perhaps on weekends you're, you know you might see them. Well sometimes, I know I won't now Saturdays because [name deleted] works and she goes to the football. The young fella plays and she goes to that. He's having his tonsils out Monday.

Mmm.

Poor old [name deleted], it won't be too good for him. I said you won't be too well and he said look Nan it can't be any worse than the sore throats I get with tonsillitis. He gets it really bad though. Yes they've had to do it. I they more or less, I don't know whether they asked at all or not but 'e's.

(Dot: He's 18 and he can't go on like that.)

Yeah. No, he said I couldn't stand to 'ave it again. Well 'e's going to have it in hospital isn't he? E'll 'ave a very sore throat.

[Interjection deleted.]

It's very old to have it out and it's much worse at that age.

Yes, oh yes, mmm. I know some of my kids had 'em but I don't, had their tonsils out, but she's a long time ago. [Name deleted]'ll be what, 56 in October.

[Conversation deleted.]

I weren't no chicken I tell you, [laughs]. I weren't 21 when he was born, mmm. So uh it's a long time since I had a little. I don't think [name deleted] had his out and [name deleted] didn't. I think the girls did. I know [name deleted] did because everything happened with 'er. She had every single; she did everything you could do.

Mmm.

Yes there was always something wrong with poor old [name of daughter who died deleted]. Mmm, but 'yeah I'm good now most times. Get a bit depressed, but you see I go for a walk twice a day. Go in the morning from here out to the main road and back.

Mmm. How far's that?

It takes me half an hour from the main. Quarter of an hour there and quarter of an hour back. So I do that twice a day.

So you do one hour's walk a day?

Yes and uh I think that saves me sanity.

Mmm.

Usually see someone. Always get a wave from two or three in the morning.

Huh.

Quite often I see someone in the afternoon.

Huh.

But uh, have a good old talk with them.

Oh, so what is up at the road, when you go up there, I mean do you see?

No nothing, just the traffic.

But you see people?

Well people on the way, really and people that go to work. And [name deleted] up here, he gets his arm and waves like mad and uh.

[Laughs.]

But there's no one around of a morning naturally to talk to me, but coming back often [name deleted] will be in her garden out the road there and I talk with her. Go into [name deleted]'s quite a bit, lady round the road

Mmm.

But, not as much as I used to. She used to come out and I think it went on for years nearly, call me in every time I went past. Mmm, ah but you'd get sick and tired of me. [Name deleted] said one night, ah I've got your bed made up and I thought, oh dear. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

[Dot: They're a lovely couple though.]

He used to often be sick of me.

[Dot: They wouldn't mind. They love company.]

Oh no, no, they're real good

[Dot: He's invited me into their garden that many times. I haven't really got there yet.]

Oh crikey. No you see I'm a gardener. That's it. Where it ends, the name.

Your yard's very neat.

Oh I keep it neat as I can.

Do you mow it yourself?

Yes.

Mmm.

Can't start the mower but ...

[Dot: She's got a crook shoulder.]

I've 'ad a shoulder replacement.

So how do you get it started?

My brother-in-law when 'e's home. Oh I drag 'em out of the orchard. I get a fella; anywhere there's a fella around, I said, would you mind?

[Laughs.]

One swing and they've got it. But I try with this arm and I can't. I'm not game with this arm.

I have trouble too.

I'm not game with me right arm because that's the one where I've, where I've had the replacement and I've fell over and put it out of plumb.

In your shoulder?

Yes, and I'm not game to do anything else. The doctor wants me to try and put up and it is a lot better. He reckons it'll make itself a new pozzie or a nest or whatever but I don't know. Sometimes I think it will and I think, oh it's real good and then away she goes again, mmm.

Mmm.

So I just can't do much with it. Can't clean me windows, can't get up high or anything like that.

Oh because you need to hold on.

Mmm, I need to hold on. I get up there and I've got ... And I can't do me hair. I can't set the back.

Oh you need to leave it straight?

And they said oh, put it in your other hand. And I say just what am I to do. I can get it up and that's about it, with this arm. This one's good but, it's easier said than done, if I get the curlers in it. I can't do me hair. I've never been real good at hair.

But I mean what does it matter? Your hair looks fine. I just, I don't do much. I just get it cut, wash it and leave it. It's less trouble. [Laughs.]

[Dot: Well mine's falling out.]

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *Just have it shaved off and wear a little beanie.* [Laughs]

One of those little hats.

[Dot: I'm not an 18 year old. I've got about three hats, but I don't know what works.]

There's no need to worry yet. She mightn't go anywhere.

It's looking pretty good.

Yeah.

[Dot: It's thinning out but I won't lose much, I don't think.]

It's hopeful. Let's hope not. I'd hate that, losing hair, crowning glory. I said to Dr [name deleted] *I've been in a real mess. I thought oh goodness I look me age now.* [Name deleted] *bought me that thing to put over me cheeks because I've got all the broken capillaries.*

I can't see anything.

Oh I've got em covered up you see, with this.

Make-up.

[Dot: Cream.]

Not a lipstick thing. Only it's a covering type of thing. I even put a drop on that bit this morning because the doctor only put ...

Oh.

Set light to me nearly, you know the smoke's going everywhere. I've all round me cheek because I've got a few real dry patches that get sore.

[Dot: Did he zap them for you?]

Zapped them?

Oh.

I've covered them this morning you see.

So you've had your veins zapped?

[Dot: He used the frozen nitrate.]

Yeah, just to do the spots.

[Dot: Mmm.]

The skin spots?

[Dot: Pre-cancerous.]

Pre-cancerous.

Yes, yes, mmm.

[Dot: They work well.]

I've done them a few times, that bit.

[Dot: Yes Nan's got them on her forehead.]

I've got it here but he said no that's different. They're different.

[Dot: The real McCoy.]

And these ones under me eye, just looks like patches of skin.

Yeah flaky skin, mmm.

That's all, yeah.

[Dot: But you worked out in that orchard for years and years and years.]

Oh for donkey's years.

[Dot: Without your hat on.]

No you couldn't keep a hat on. I had 26 years over there, rain, hail, sunshine and ah all weathers. And they were all broken, broken capillaries.

So you worked?

Oh I did yes when we come down, I'll tell you. Yes.

You retired late?

Oh no I didn't retire late. I worked until I was 62. But [husband's name deleted] retired at 62 because he could with, being in the Army.

Mmm.

And just as well he did because the rest of the, he had about two good years and that was it.

Mmm

He retired at 62 and he died at 69, so he had two good years and after that it was no good.

He was sick?

Mmm.

[Dot: You did a good job to keep him home all those years.]

I couldn't have done Dot, if his works hadn't ... Right till the day he went he used his bowel. Good as gold that way but he was too big. He got bigger and bigger.

So what happened to him?

Oh what do they call it? It wasn't emphysema; it was coronary pulmonary chronic respiratory airways disease.

Mmm, so did it affect his brain?

No, no, no, his brain was good but he couldn't breathe properly, mainly.

Ah.

And you see they'd try and sit him up, he couldn't bear it.

Mmm.

[Inaudible], it wasn't emphysema or he'd be sitting up with that.

Chronic obstructive airways disease?

Mmm, yes and he had heart and lung trouble as well.

[Dot: But you got a bit of home help for a while didn't you?]

Oh yes, it was good. They'd ah, I think every Wednesday I used to go and get me groceries and I think there was one day a month I could go to town if I wanted to. Used to come and stop. There was a trained sister used to come and sit with him while I went to town, so that was good, mmm.

How do you do your shopping now?

Oh friends round the road they take me. I've still got the car but I've ...

[Dot: Bit nervous?]

No, it's just me shoulder hurts me too much. If the doctor knew it ...

[Dot: Oh hasn't it got power steering.]

No, she's like a big truck.

[Dot: Oh no wonder you hit the shed with it then.]

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

I didn't even get out of the shed. Started it in gear. Whhht, she went forward, joined that shed on. I blocked it. Roy said that's not that bad. Why are you worrying about that? I said it looked a lot better now that I've tidied the shed up because me youngest boy had all his carpentry tools and all these drawers and drawers of nuts and bolts and god you know, I don't know.

Laughs.]

Tipped them all out. Hit the wall and tipped them off the wall. Oh, you never say anything ... It's real good now. I'll show you on the way out.

[Laughs.] Did you get rid of them all?

No I stacked them up and I've got all a lot of the screws and things in little, things I had plants in, containers.

[Dot: Ice cream containers.]

These little ones like that.

Oh.

You can't see that any ways it's got the paper around it. That's doing well. But I bet if it'll ever flower though.

[Dot: Is that the one I gave you?]

No. You gave me a ...

[Dot: Clematis.]

No not a clematis.

Cyclamen?

Jerborah.

They need the right aspect don't they.

A nice jerborah out there and it did all right. He said I should put it out and next thing it 'ad another couple of flowers. It had a couple of flowers. I thought it was dead but it come to life again and away it went. I said it never did any good inside and he said you put it outside. God, that'll do anything out there. It's so cold but it hasn't.

[Dot: Did you have a frost this morning?]

Yesterday, not this morning. It was cold. It was freezing when I went for a walk and oh crikey because I feel the cold around my shoulders. I had [name deleted]'s old coat on 'e gave me a brown windcheater thing. I don't know whether he grew out of it or not.

[Dot: Did you wear a beanie?]

No. Never ever 'ave and I don't like, I don't own any hats. I used to wear one at work but it got knocked off that much in the trees I give up.

Mmm, you only really need a beanie when it's really, really cold. If you're walking you usually get hot.

I 'ad me sunglasses because they reckoned I had.

[Dot: Glaucoma.]

Ah, but I didn't. They said [name deleted] had it; [name deleted] had it. I had it. Treated me for years and years and years.

Mmm, it must be helpful for this though, the skin under your eyes, the sunglasses.

Mmm, oh I suppose, yes. I had to wear them. He said wear them even when you go outside and then she went to England, Dr [name deleted] and I went to Dr [name deleted] and he said oh I don't think you've got it. I'm sure you haven't.

Mmm.

He did all the tests and then he said get the family to come in. [Name deleted] hadn't been. Oh he did go eventually and he was right, but see [name deleted] has lost a bit of the sight but he had Bell's palsy and he reckoned that's what caused it.

Oh.

Yes. Young [name deleted]'s had it about three times I think, of [name deleted]'s. She's 21 now.

[Dot: Genes.]

Mmm.

She's had Bell's palsy?

Three times. Yes and [name deleted] *had Bell's palsy, but what [name deleted] didn't have is nobody's business.*

[Dot: She was an unfortunate person.]

Yeah. Anything you could get she got.

Mmm

Yeah she was in hospital with it but [pause] no, she's been gone a while.

[Dot: Seven or eight years ago.]

When we retired.

So what happened to her?

Well I think [pause] I blamed the Royal because the minute [pause] you'd take her, send her in there, you'd whip her in the ambulance, she had epilepsy ...

Ohh, mmm.

She developed that later in life after everything else. And I think she just fitted and fitted and fitted until her heart gave out.

Mmm.

Massive heart attack, you see she was only in the hospital a week before but they'd look at her [pause].

[Dot: Record.]

Record, and she had a bad record because she took an overdose a couple of times when [name deleted] left her; [lowers voice] got himself another woman. [Raises voice.] And I don't think he's any better off because she's got a bad heart and something else and she's crook all the time. I think that's awful but I think, oh well.

[Dot: What goes around comes around.]

Mmm, he knew [name deleted] was sick when he married her but he just couldn't hack it, so.

Did they have children?

Two, mmm. [Pause.] *There's a boy and a girl.*

So what are they doing now?

Ah, oh well [name deleted]'s got about four kids [laughs] and a live-in partner.

Oh.

Nothing, really.

So you've got great grand children?

I do and I'm about to have twin great grand children, in November, yes [name deleted]'s boy; [laughs]; poor old [name deleted], oh Nan, he said, I said, they were having the second baby and he was that excited about it. No more Nan. I'm dropping anchor. I said to him you needn't be [laughs] so definite about that duck 'cos the next thing he rang and he said there was, it was twins.

[Dot: Is that the guy in Darwin?]

Yeah. He was in the navy. And poor old [name deleted] she gets morning sickness that badly, poor kid. It was bad enough when you haven't got any but she's got the little girl you see; she won't be two until December. He said he'll have three children under three.

[Dot: Oohh gosh.]

Mmm.

When the little one's born, yes under three; she won't be two till December and the babies are due at the end of November,

[Dot: I guess she'll need some help.]

Mmm, so he's trying to get transferred ... I said yes you'll have to transfer to Melbourne. He's in Darwin.

Mmm.

If he gets transferred there they'll probably put him on another boat. See he's been on two and they've both been decommissioned, so he's been lucky that way.

So does she have family that can help her?

Not up there. Up at [name of town deleted], [name of town deleted] or [name of town deleted] or whatever it is.

[Dot: From here.]

It's such a long way there. It'll be better if they get to Melbourne because it'll be closer to the...

[Interjection deleted.]

[Name deleted] *and* [name deleted] *get over a bit more and her mother I reckon but, no.*

[Dot: Twins!]

[Laughs.] Yes.

[Laughs.]

And they said they'd know, last trip, what they were.

Mmm.

Haven't heard.

Mmm.

But I bet it's twin girls; and that'll be three girls you see. [Laughs.] He's not having anymore, [inaudible] but I mean she, [name deleted], said it'd be nice if it's a little boy but it doesn't matter, as long as it's all right, doesn't matter. But now there's too but I said, still there goes your little boy but if it ...

[Dot: Might be a boy and a girl.]

It could be yes, or two boys.

Yeah. [Laughs.]

It couldn't get worse.

There's more chance of having a boy I suppose if you've got two, isn't there than if you had one.

I don't know. Maybe [inaudible], surely yes. He said, oh well if I don't get a boy Nan I don't. That's when he knew there'd be two of them.

Yeah.

When he knew there'd be two children but now there'll be three.

Mmm, yeah

But still if it was going to be the last one it won't make any difference will it.

[Dot: Na, he's done well.]

It could be three girls.

[Dot: Twins run in the family do they?]

Well Mum, there was twins in Mum's family. None of us, my lot, have had them.

Mmm.

There was none in the [name deleted]'s' that I know of.

Apparently with older women they're more common.

Oh.

I was reading that.

Mmm, oh well she's, I don't know how old [name deleted] is, but she's not very old.

I think I read something about how with women putting off having children.

Yes [with emphasis].

That there's more likely to be multiple births, because there's a more, greater chance of it when you're older.

[Laughs.] *I thought one at a time was enough.*

Yes.

Yeah.

[Dot: Good fishing.]

Mmm.

So is there anything you don't like about living here? Like any problems you have with the house?

Oh getting it painted. And I need work doing inside, but I'll just see how I go.

Mmm.

How it goes with the ... And the Veterans' Affairs will come, but only twice a year to do jobs. So the chappie came and cleaned me windows in December, did the edge of the lawns because that's terribly hard to do with a bung arm.

Mmm.

And ah, I thought I'm going to Launceston for a couple of weeks, up with me brother and sister so I'll ring them when I come back. They said to ring them about May or June.

Mmm.

And I thought I'll ring then when I come back but ... [pause] I don't know how I'll go if I can [pause] ... I don't want to have to go into a home or anything. I'd be all right I mean, but I thought well I'm only going out of the frying pan into the fire if I move into another house. If I move I'd rather go where I didn't have to move anymore.

Mmm.

Where I'd ...

You've got this house. It's very well established and well organised.

Yes, I've got this good here when, [pause] after [husband's name deleted] died.

[Dot: Your new kitchen.]

My new kitchen and I've got built in wardrobes in my room, which are good.

[Dot: Oh they're beautiful.]

There's nothing ...

[Dot: She's kept it very tidy haven't you?]

I keep it tidy. Well I say the garden's a mess at the moment.

[Laughs.] *It's a very tidy garden.* [Laughs.]

But I don't like to pull the freesias out.

[Laughs.]

Because they're so pretty.

[Dot: They're beautiful and they smell divine.]

They look a mess and of course when the finish flowering they look a bigger mess.

[Dot: Yeah, they go a bit brown and yucky.]

Oh horrible.

Mmm.

But each time I think that's it, I'm not having anymore and I pull them all out; there's so many little bulbs left they just come back up.

They self-seed.

Yeah, same with those other little flowers there. They keep growing.

The little, the purple ones.

They were all right when they're purple but they're pretty horrible when they die. Just a few there want pulling out again, mmm.

So how often do you paint it?

Well, [brother-in-law's name deleted] painted it when [husband's name deleted] died, so it'll be eight years since it was done.

So it's due, really.

Oh yes, but see inside I think oh, the door and the window ledges, yeah, oh the window ledges especially, all round and they'll be looking awful and I see if I might, and my bedroom, I lay there looking at spots on the ceiling. There's no way I could get my arm up. This one I could. But see I've got no strength in it.

[Dot: No.]

But in the uh, all of it around the woodwork is starting to worry me a bit but I'll have to see how I go with that.

[Dot: Veterans' Affairs'll help you out there. You're in Veterans' Affairs.]

Yeah.

[Dot: Mmm. They're very good.]

Are they?

How much would it cost to do?

I've got the quote for the outside. I got one from a young chap at [name of town deleted]. That was \$3,300. And a fella out the road's going to do it for me ... with the paint it's going to cost me about \$2,000, so it's a lot of difference.

Mmm.

Uh, and the other chap didn't mention the roof in his quote and this one's got the roof.

[Dot: Oh that's brilliant.]

Yes I've got it written down somewhere: \$1,275 for the house, \$420 for the roof but I've got to supply the paint.

Mmm.

That's \$1,694; well that's a heck of a difference.

[Dot: By gee it is.]

It'll be \$2,000 odd by the time I get the paint I suppose.

Mmm.

He's got what I want. Well it's going to [pause] I'd like to change the roof.

[Dot: What colour?]

I've got blue in my mind.

[Dot: I like blue.]

But [name deleted] said, Mum you can't have that awful old red one again. And I said well I don't know what it'll cost me to get from red to some other colour.

[Dot: Red to blue might be a hassle.]

I'll say to the chap and see what he says.

[Dot: Use a spray gun.]

He'll be able to advise you.

Yes. Oh she said don't get that awful red again.

[Dot: And always ask them what kind of paint they think is the best buy too.]

He's got written down what I should get and [name deleted] said he can get it from his cobbler when it's half price.

[Dot: Because he's in the building trade.]

But I don't know whether he wants to do it or not because [pause], he hasn't come about it. I've told him what I need.

[Dot: He won't be able to do it until the spring.]

No that's right he said he can't do it until September/ October.

Mmm

And he said no leave it Mum and let him come and ...

[Dot: Come and look it over.]

Mmm, look it over.

This is your son who'll come and have a look, you're saying, for the paint?

One of his friends said he'd get it for me half price.

[Dot: 'Cos your son's got a building ticket hasn't he?]

Yes.

He's a builder?

Oh he [whispers] [inaudible].

That'd be handy having a builder in the family.

[Dot: Yeah, but they never do anything for family.]

They never do anything for you.

[Laughs.]

[Dot: It's like marrying a woodchopper. They never chop wood for their wives.]

[Laughs.]

[Dot: Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *Oh he put that back but up but it's not terribly successful. [Name deleted] says it's too high Nan. I said I don't know the rain still comes in pretty well. I've always got a little bit that it doesn't get into.*

Through the back door?

Out there it's got that cover over.

Mmm.

[Dot: Probably not long enough.]

No I don't know what it is but anyway.

Mmm, so do you have the money to paint it?

[Dot: You don't have to borrow it do you.]

No, oh no, no. I've got, I've got enough. I'm trying to manage with what [pause] we didn't have enough savings but [husband's name deleted] got quite a bit of [pause] ... all sorts of back pay and all sorts of fees and he had forty two thousand put away. They'd only let him have a little bit of his super to start with. I think that's how I got the extra money when I did the cupboards and that. Because he was in a real panic I wouldn't have enough to live on and I wouldn't be able to go on holidays.

Mmm.

But I had, I had money in the b ... [Pause.] *I had about \$10,000. It goes down, but it's still round about.*

Mmm.

And uh, I just don't want to not have enough to, for a funeral if I have one. I've donated my body to science, that's caused some fun and games I'll tell you.

[Dot: Giggles.]

[Laughs.]

The boys don't like it at all.

Mmm.

[Dot: It does cause a lot of family upsets.]

Yes.

Mmm.

[Dot: I had all my organs donated to science but they won't want any of them now.]

Oh, because they've been zapped with chemo?

[Dot: Yeah.]

No, I had that they could have any of my organs. I was just listening to young [name deleted] and [name deleted] blames her. I think it wasn't her fault and she was saying that when she was doing her.

[Dot: Nursing?]

Training.

Mmm.

And they were home, yeah people, whoever, were going around the homes. They were going around the homes seeing if they could get people to donate their bodies [inaudible].

Mmm.

I said, oh they can have mine. I've done nothing in me lifetime to do anyone else any good. If it'll help I don't mind.

[Dot: The only thing, with old Mr [name deleted] when he donated his body to science, this is going back twenty years, the family had a memorial service but they didn't have a funeral because the university had his whole body and that upset the family.]

Well no, they said that I could have just an ordinary funeral with me body, there.

And then they'll take the body?

Yes, but see where [inaudible] my son-in-law is in with the undertakers', and it's [name deleted]'s, [name deleted]'s' had the bodies there; they store them or something.

[Dot: That's correct, in a big fridge.]

That wouldn't be too much hassle.

Oh, so they're all set up to deal with that situation?

Mmm.

[Dot: Yeah they're very in the know.]

Yes, so I thought well that'd be fine [pause]. I can't see what the hassle's about but [name deleted] said oh you deserve better than that Mum. You brought us up. You looked after us all right. I said yes but that's I've ever done in me life, wife and a mother. What else?

[Dot: That's a pretty good job.]

Useless, completely and utterly useless I am.

We wouldn't have the next generation without that. [Laughs.]

No ... [Laughs.] No, but she ...

[Dot: You've done a great job.]

But I thought oh well I don't want to touch [husband's name deleted]'s money. But I don't want to get too low. I want to have enough to bury me if they've got to. Not bury me. Don't let em. [Laughs.] Uh.

So you don't want to be buried?

I couldn't bear to be stuck down ... I mean I've got claustrophobia that's all. What difference is it gonna make? I'm gonna be put in a box and sizzled.

[Laughs.]

So well that'll happen anyway. They'll send [name deleted] a box with the red bits, the ashes you see.

Oh so they use the body and then they burn it.

They cremate it and send the ashes to the family and I think I've got [name deleted] down next of kin naturally as the eldest one, so [lowers voice] he won't be very impressed. I said to [name deleted] I don't want him to put me in the safe with that baby of theirs.

[Laughs.]

Cos see they've got her, she was after all that time and I don't think they've done anything with them since they got them. [Name deleted] got *them for them*.

They had a baby that died?

Yes a still born one.

[Dot: Oh my goodness.]

I said I don't want to be shoved in the bedroom. You can just imagine the claustrophobia of being stuck in the safe.

[Dot: Oh.]

Mmm, I shouldn't have said that [laughs] but I thought oh dear I hadn't thought of that. But I said no put it, if they won't let you scatter me over [husband's name deleted]; take me up to Mum and Dad. So [husband's name deleted], my brother's he's got a grave ...

[Dot: In Launie?]

And he's got all the little pebbles, and my sister and brother-in-law look after it; and it's real good and they could put it on there.

So where is it, at the cemetery?

Mmm.

[Dot: No you could have their wish out at the lawn.]

I don't want to be in there. I want to be scattered. I said put me on the, over the top but you see it's a lawn cemetery

[Dot: I'm aware of that.]

And they mightn't let them

[Dot: Allow that.]

No, throw dust there. Then I thought oh if they won't do that. Still I've still got the two things you know to write on. Mine and ... [husband's name deleted]'s is done.

[Dot: Oh the plaque.]

They could still put me on that couldn't they?

[Dot: Yep.]

They wouldn't object to that.

[Dot: Nup.]

I said even if you only throw a handful I mean I'll be there with him, that part, whatever it is

[Dot: Yeah.]

And uh the rest up home in Launceston, Mum and Dad and [name deleted]; move meself back with the family.

[Dot: Spread yourself.]

Spread meself. I said to [name deleted] give me to [name deleted] and [name deleted], she wouldn't mind. I don't know; he's not impressed either. I'm not very popular with me family. [Name deleted] doesn't mind.

[Dot: Oh she works in the health industry and understands it all.]

Yes, mmm, but I said look you'll be better off, oh to [name deleted]. He said for god sake don't say that to [laughs] [name deleted]. I said you'd be better off financially. Laughs

Oh.

See I wouldn't have to pay for that.

Oh.

See I've been trying to have about five thousand, to make sure I've got about much left because you see if I have to have an autopsy [pause] or if I have an operation, they won't take me.

Mmm, oh so you need it there in case.

So I've got to have it, I thought I'm no better off that way. I was thinking oh that covered that out but it

[Dot: Doesn't.]

I just have to be prepared.

So you learnt all this from [husband's name deleted] dying and having to deal with it then did you?

Yes.

[Dot: Yeah and her granddaughter was trained as a nurse and they see a lot of new things.]

Oh so she's told you all about it?

And she said, oh don't worry about it Nan. If we don't like to see the bodies and that, they'll cover the faces up.

[Dot: Mmm.]

And then it's just, just working ...

[Dot: A vessel for them to work on.]

Mmm.

[Dot: To learn.]

Yeah. I mean it'd do some good wouldn't it?

[Dot: Oh for sure.]

So this is interesting. Yeah. So you got your idea from granddaughter?

Well she said about it and see, [name deleted] blames her.

[Laughs.] Is that his daughter?

No it's his niece; his sister's daughter's daughter.

Mmm.

And the granddaughter works at [name deleted]'s Funerals?

The one, she was going to be a nurse but she couldn't pass the, what was it, biology.

[Dot: She had two cracks at it.]

They still yeah tried and got in touch with her and said she could have another go but she just couldn't. I reckon she was like I was with French. I couldn't get it through.

[Dot: The gray matter.]

No. Mum and Dad had me coached and I got 52.

Mmm, mmm.

The last exam I passed by two marks.

[Dot: I passed by one in maths. I hate maths.]

Oh dear oh dear I was shocking. I can still feel the panic of trying to understand it. The poor old teacher drank water out of a [laughs] vase of flowers, trying to explain, trying to get through to us to have a drink of water in French. You weren't allowed to talk in English.

[Laughs.]

It had to be in French. And I can still feel that awful panic of not being able to understand.

[Dot: Mmm.]

And I reckon that's just how [name deleted] was with the biology. She just couldn't

[Dot: Grasp it.]

Grasp it.

So what's she doing now?

Oh well she's over in uh...

[Dot: name of town deleted.]

Broome at the moment.

[Dot: Working in a resort.]

That's right. I wasn't sure what she was doing when she went back with those two fellas isn't it?

[Conversation deleted.]

So it sounds like you're not giving any thought to moving or living in a retirement village?

No I should do but you see [name deleted] and [name deleted] say, [name deleted] says, oh he carries on, you should get into a home into somewhere into a home where if you get sick you'll be looked after. But they've bought a unit now out at ...

[Interjection deleted.]

No up in Launceston.

So [name deleted] and [name deleted], this is your brother?

Sister. Sister and brother-in-law.

So these are the ones you go to visit?

Yeah, I'm going go to my brother, my brother, [name deleted], for a while. I'm looking around to see what I did with his coat, but I've got it in on the bed so I don't forget it.

So you're on your way? You'll be going soon?

Monday morning.

[Dot: On the bus. How are you getting to the bus?]

A friend of [name deleted]'s, a woman that works there at, at the [name deleted] Department. Not the [name deleted] Department, some, something and resources. He's still doing the same job. He's in the [name deleted] Department. He's an inspector. And he's still seeing to anything that goes wrong with explosions or anything like that and uh.

[Dot: One of his workmates is taking you to Launie?]

Yeah.

Oh.

She picks me up. She lives on [name deleted] Road.

Oh you're not going on the bus?

I'm going on the bus but she's going to take me.

[Dot: To the city.]

See from here I've got to get me bus out to the main road. I take me case out to [name deleted] and [name deleted]'s. Then I bring the car back and put it to bed and walk back out and then from town

you see I get dropped in Macquarie Street and I've got down right up the top of Collins Street. I'm not going anymore; can't be bothered. Last time I came back from Launceston, the twenty to three bus goes up to Redlines, must park up there for a while and he leaves from there and goes down and picks people up outside the Treasury building or whatever it is, in Murray Street.

[Dot: I'm going up Monday if you needed a lift into town.]

Oh well yes she's going to pick me up

[Dot: Oh that's good.]

Yes, and take me. She goes anyway.

[Dot: Pick you up here?]

Yeah. She said don't go trying to get out to the corner. And she said; if you can't get home just stay put. I'll be home about one or two o'clock or something. I'm going to catch the twenty to three bus. It must be about one because I've got to fill a bit of time in.

So what do you do, you take your bags up and then come back?

I used to take them out in the car and catch the bus to town and they put me off in Macquarie Street and then I'd have to get them to the top of Collins but since I hurt me arm it's a real hassle. I've always had me arm but since I had trouble with it.

So you'd take them up there but you wouldn't go at the time you took them. You'd go back later.

No, I had to leave it in the house 'nd drag it out before then.

So which house? Your friends up the road here?

The last house on the right before you get to the corner.

Mmm.

It's not far there, [name deleted]'s. And the case has got wheels, I can drag it along but I'd rather not at night because it's pretty poor.

[Dot: I tried that in Switzerland and lost the wheels.]

Yeah, [laughs] I haven't lost any wheels yet but ...

They're all right for airports aren't they.

Yes they're good for that.

But not for rough ground aren't they?

No, not to, drag them all the way round, half the way round town.

[Dot: You came with me that day we went up to Launceston and back in one day. It was good.]

Yes it was good. That's all right. Yes I enjoyed that but things were still the same with the traffic I tell you.

[Dot: Yes well I had to get you to navigate me through Launceston because I didn't know how to do it.]

And I thought yes well all right as long as the traffic doesn't change because [name deleted] says it changes all the time, but it was hot that way.

Mmm.

[Dot: No we were blessed.]

And they hadn't changed the streets. If there'd have been one-way streets I wouldn't have known which way... [Laughs.]

Yeah, that gets me confused, a bit like Hobart, but once you know it's all right.

Mmm.

So your sister is going to move into a retirement village?

Well, they've moved into a retirement village, but they still well they've just, if they get sick they've still got to go somewhere else, so I can't see he's any better off at all. I mean I could do that. I could go to [name of town deleted], but then if I get sick if I'm not lucky enough to drop off the tree or something.

[Dot: Mmm, got the next move.]

Well [name deleted], he says oh yes it'd have to be some twig wouldn't it.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] [Inaudible.]

The thing with that is not many people do die in nursing homes. I think most die at home.

[Dot: That's their wish. It's everybody's wish.]

You see [husband's name deleted] didn't want to be in hospital. That's why I had him home.

Mmm.

But I couldn't've managed, as I say, if his works had petered out on him; because he got so big.

Dr [name deleted], he said it was the oxygen and the medication.

Oh, he was on steroids.

Mmm, yeah.

[Dot: Mmm. Very bloated.]

Mmm, so that's why I've got the other photo of him.

But you've got the issue of being on your own. Like you could look after him but you've got no one to look after you.

No, no one to look after me; I tell him off every now and then too, doesn't take a bit of notice.

[Laughs.]

[Dot: It must be hard though, God.]

Look how you hung round and looked after me the day they put me in Calvary, but [husband's name deleted] wouldn't've. He might've and surprised me.

[Dot: It's amazing what they can do.]

Yes, you wouldn't know.

[Dot: Since I've been crook [name deleted]'s been unbelievable.]

Has he?

[Dot: He's done things I wish he'd done thirty years ago.]

[Laughs.] Yes.

Then you learn from it.

It's a real awakening.

All these things you think they can't do, especially cooking.

[Dot: Well you take over from Mum don't you?]

Mmm.

[Dot: His mother nurtured him and babied him so I do.]

Well that's right, mmm.

[Dot: He still won't iron but.]

Mmm. Oh [name deleted], well [name deleted], he's done a dashed good job. He looks after himself real well.

[Dot: Your brother?]

He's on his own is he?

Yes he's a widower. [Named deleted] had rheumatoid arthritis. She got up off the toilet one night and he heard the bang and he went in and she was dead in the toilet.

[Dot: Oh, in a whisper.]

How did that happen?

Oh, I think she had a heart attack.

Mmm.

But she, I'd never seen, she'd rock backwards and forwards on her chair to get up and she wouldn't let [name deleted] help her. She said it hurt too much.

Oh with the arthritis?

Mmm. Poor thing.

[Dot: Sore to touch.]

Oh she had a shoulder operation. She had her leg stiffened and then they had to take it out because it didn't work; her knee.

[Dot: Oh gosh.]

Oh she had a terrible time, oh poor little devil. She was only 55 when she died.

Oh dear.

[Name deleted]'s been, well he looked after her for years.

Yeah.

And he sort of got used to cooking and everything and he just did everything for [name deleted]. But he said it's terribly, terribly lonely but he's had a girlfriend. But she told him the family'd always come first and I think probably it's pretty well the same with [name deleted]. But I don't think it'll go any further but he still sees her every now and again when she wants some work done.

[Laughs.]

[Dot: Ulterior motive.]

Yes, my word.

Mmm

But anyway, it's company for him now and then. He doesn't see her all that often I don't think.

Yes loneliness is an issue for a lot of older people isn't it?

Mmm. Yeah, but I'm, I'm pretty right. Well I lock myself in. I'd rather winter than the summer, as far as company.

[Dot: Would you?]

Yes for myself because I'm shut in by half past five now, quarter past five. Shut the doors and pull the blinds down and lock all the doors.

[Dot: It's the shortest day today.]

Today?

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 18

[Tape turned on mid conversation, about her stepmother.]

When she come up she was just sooo lovely to us.

Mmm.

And uh, she was only in her early forties and Dad was sixty, but anyway they had a child and uh, it just tells you what a lovely woman she was. She said [name deleted] would you like me to call our baby [her deceased mother's name deleted], if it's a girl. He said oohh I'd love you to ... I've gone all goosey ... He said I'd have loved you to but I wouldn't have dared ask you.

Mmm.

Well she said well I'd love to. So I've got a lovely sister, [name deleted].

Umm, so your, your stepmother loved your mother?

Yes, yes she did.

Mmm, that's unusual isn't it?

Yes.

Mmm, so how long have you lived here?

Oh dear, about 62 years.

Goodness me, [laughs] you must have been quite young when you came here?

Oh well I was 23 when I was married and I'm 82 now.

Mmm.

[Dot: Eighty-three tomorrow.]

Eighty-three tomorrow, yeah, shortest day. That's why I didn't grow. Well they've always told me it's because; they say now it's the 21st, but it used to always be the 22nd when I was young.

Yes.

But anyway that's beside the point. I'm eighty-two but [husband's name deleted] was two years younger than me. [Husband's name deleted], lost him in November, on November the fourth. Life was never the same but then again we've all got to part sometime haven't we.

Yeah, mmm.

But uh well we've had a wonderful happy and our two lovely boys and [pause] it was a long time before we could have them because [husband's name deleted] was in the navy for six years.

Mmm.

And he thought probably it was something to being in there you know and heat.

[Dot: Trauma.]

Yes, yes he had a lot of trauma.

Oh, so he was in the war?

Yes, he was in a patrol boat that was torpedoed and helped have to pick up parts of his coppers, you know, that must do something to them.

Mmm.

But anyway we had two sons and the oldest one was [name deleted] and [pause] then we had another terrible trauma with him. He was killed off a motorbike.

Mmm.

[Dot: Just five years ago.]

Just previous to when they come over, when [name deleted] was, we were all sent for.

Mmm.

He married a nursing sister; met her at the Royal.

Mmm.

He'd broken his leg playing football at [name of town deleted] and [laughs] went into the Royal and while she was waiting to go into the midi part, she'd come in to do her midwifery ...

Oh.

She met him and that was that

Mmm.

And they ended up marrying and he went to [name of town deleted] to live, joined the air force and was on his way to work one morning and [pause] he was killed, [lowers voice] so we've had some trauma in our lives but [pause] luckily we haven't had any worries with [other son's name deleted] and our lovely daughter-in-law. I just love her dearly and the three granddaughters. Sadly we didn't get a son. [Laughs.] I said to her all the three girls will you please use [name deleted] before your or after your husband's name if ever you're marry. Take the youngest, for example, her boyfriend's name is [name deleted]. His name's [name deleted] and I thought well [name deleted, name deleted] wouldn't make it very long would it. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

And the other middle one she hasn't got a friend, a boy friend and the other one's got a friend and his name is [name deleted]; [name deleted, name deleted] wouldn't be very long would it.

[Dot: Sounds good.]

[Laughs.]

Anyway I suggested it to them and I hope they do it, otherwise [pause] eh, [name deleted]'s the end of our family.

Well they could just keep it altogether, because some people choose to do that these days.

Well the girl that come to do my work, she was the daughter of a dentist that used to be at [name of town deleted], [name deleted], and her name was oh, [name deleted] or something. And I said oh my daughter-in-law's name is [name deleted] and she said yes, I kept my own name.

[Dot: I'm a [name deleted].]

And uh and she said yes I kept my own name, she said my husband's name's, oh [name deleted], but she said I still kept me name, [name deleted].

Mmm.

And I said oh well there's hope for my daughter and my granddaughters yet.

Mmm, they'll just have to call their children [name deleted, name deleted], won't they?

[Laughs.] Yes, yeah.

So you were here in this house on your own for a while then?

Oh [pause] yes.

Before you had your children?

Uh, oh no, what am I ...

When your husband was in the war?

Oh. Oh no, he was here but he was traumatized. Yes, yes.

And that's why you couldn't have them. It wasn't because he was away in the navy then?

No, no. Oh, he went away for six years.

Ah, were you here then?

Uh, did I live here while he was in the navy? How long is it since the war ended?

[Dot: Oh Gawd.]

[Laughs softly.]

We would have been married 60 years,

Mmm.

At Christmas time only then he passed away in November.

So it's about 58 years since the war isn't it?

Yes, yes.

Yeah.

Yeah, well we've lived, that's how long we lived here.

So he was away for part of the time that you had this house?

Yes, yes. Yes, we bought it off Mr [name deleted] and I was paying for it before he got home. People moved out and we moved straight into here but it was only an old [pause] battleaxe of a place wasn't it [laughs] but we've had a lot done to it.

It doesn't look that old.

[Dot: Oh it, it was. That was the fireplace and that's all gone.]

I'll show you right through it in a minute.

Oh so you've built on at the front and there was a smaller one at the back?

Yes, yes, yes.

Yeah, I'd like to have a look through it.

Yes.

You've done a lot of work, mmm.

Yes. That used to be the bathroom door

Mmm.

And that went along here and the bath was there. And the little pantry, no the bath was down here and there was a little pantry there and this was a little tiny kitchen.

It's a wonderful big kitchen now.

Yes [pause] *and uh that was the boy, [name deleted] and [name deleted]'s bedroom in there.*

Huh.

And my little bedroom was 12 by 12. It's right along the other end of the lounge room.

Mmm.

And there was a big hallway

Mmm.

And it used to come through and a door used to come through in there

Mmm.

Into the big lounge room in there, where I've got me.

[Dot: Bed.]

Granddaughter's.

[Dot: Furniture.]

Furniture. [Laughs.] But there's mould on the wall in there and I've got to get somebody, see if I can get someone to come and wash the wall for me. I can't do it now either.

Mmm.

[Dot: They could treat it I reckon.]

Yes. Oh, it's a bit of a mess but it'll get done.

So where were you living before you moved to here?

In, right here with me father and mother-in-law. [Indicating next door.]

Next door?

Yes.

Huh.

[Dot: They had a shop at the end here, it was a long building, a shop, but it's now been removed.]

Mmm.

Yeah.

[Dot: And it's moved up next to the other shop and it was the CWA room for years.]

Yes, right up near [name deleted]'s shop.

Mmm.

[Dot: They had a business. They ran that in town.]

You could buy everything from Royal Doulton and crystal to horseshoe nails or whatever.

Mmm.

It was a, everything sh ...

[Dot: General store.]

Everything store.

So you were born in [name of town deleted]?

Food. [Pause.] I was born in [name of town deleted].

Oh right, very nearby.

Mmm-mmm.

And when did you come to [name of town deleted]?

Oh I went to work down in [name of town deleted], down at Mr [name deleted] and uh I, I met [husband's name deleted] when I was playing tenn ... badminton

Mmm.

And uh of course me being a little shortie and he was six foot one, I had to play up at the net and he had to play up the back. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

He'd beat me and I'd say get off the net.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] But that's how I met him anyway.

Mmm.

And uh then the war come and [pause] we were apart for six years and that was dreadful. I know what Christian went through, my granddaughter, with her [pause] partner had to go away to the Middle East.

[Dot: To Iraq. [Whispers.] He's just come back.]

Oh right.

Oh yes. Yes. I said [name deleted]; I know what you've been through darling I said I've.

[Conversation deleted.]

[Pause.] Ah never mind he's back safe and sound thank the dear lord.

[Dot: Yeah.]

So did [husband's name deleted], because that man who sat down on watch where [husband's name deleted] had been sitting a few minutes before, he was a lovely tall blonde young man. [Husband's name deleted] said he was only 19 and he was an only child and he had to help pick parts of him up and luckily, if there's any luck about it, they found his arm from there down with his watch on it.

Huh.

So his purser [pause, sniffs] sent his parents the watch.

Oh.

So what a trauma that must have been!

Mmm, yuh.

But [sighs] he was a wonderfully patient, wonderful patient husband and father. He really was [pause].

Mmm.

But I'm not going to leave here Anne, you're Anne aren't you?

Jan

[Dot: Jan.]

Jan. I'm not going to leave here Jan while I can see at all

Mmm.

Because I've got so many lovely memories here and I'm close to [son's name deleted] and [name deleted].

Mmm, mmm

And the girls, except [name deleted] of course. She's in [name of town deleted] but uh.

[Dot: And you get a lot of home help, which is good.]

Oh marvellous. Honestly we are so lucky. Our poor old parents didn't get anything, any help.

Mmm.

Where I have a, a girl come on Monday and she puts the cleaner all through the house and wipes round all the cupboards.

Mmm.

And uh if I want her to nick up the shop for me I clean the toilet and the bath, which, ah doesn't need cleaning because it's never used. I only wipe it around and give it a couple of squirts. And then I clean the shower when it's nice and warm before I get out of it. I sit the little, squirter in the corner [pause] and I clean the shower before I get out of it and then I can say to Jan, Jan I've done all the little jobs out there can you nick up to the shop for me. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

And that gives us time to go up to the shop and put the cleaner through for me; and then she comes back on Friday [pause] morning and gets the order, my grocery order, takes that down to Huonville and uh brings all my groceries home.

Mmm.

[Dot: That's [name deleted] isn't it?]

[Name deleted], yes.

So how many hours do you get a week?

Two.

Mmm. So two one-hour sessions?

Yes but Veterans' Affairs have allowed me to have [pause] [name deleted] to clean my windows and do the garden.

Mmm.

But they won't allow him to cut the grass. I have to pay for the grass to be cut.

Huh.

[Dot: It's changed in the last few months.]

Yes.

So they used to cut the grass?

Yeah, the Vets they took that off me.

So what do you do about that now?

I have to pay [name deleted]. I had to pay him \$15 the other day to do it.

Mmm.

But ...

[Dot: It looks good when it's cut.]

But I don't mind that. I'm lucky to get as much help as we do really.

Mmm.

But I'd like to have me grass cut but you can't be greedy.

[Dot: I'd do it but I don't have the energy to cut me own. Laughs.]

I wouldn't dare let you think of it dear.

[Laughs.]

The shock of her getting sick, oh Gawd!

[Dot: Oh I'll be right.]

You'll be right darling, if prayers will keep you, oh well you'll be right.

[Dot: I'll give you plenty of curry for the next twenty years.]

[Laughs.] *So do I. Yes, I'm glad Jan's not saying the same as Dr [name deleted] told me, after we lost [son's name deleted]. [Name deleted] and I sat here for a fortnight bawling you know, trying to get over the trauma of losing him. [Pause.] Oh, couldn't believe it had happened to us and oh, I said this is no good. I'm going to go to Dr [name deleted]. We used to have a nice doctor from down here named [name deleted]. I thought he was lovely. And anyway [husband's name deleted] went to him and I said I'll come in with you. He might talk to me; see me, without an appointment. So [husband's name deleted] went in and he was in there for quite a while. And he went out and I said did you get on all right and he said yes. He said he was very nice. And uh he said I asked him would he see you and he said yes, so uh, I went in. [Husband's name deleted] stayed in the car. And he said is there anything*

at all that helps you [name deleted]? I said yes Doctor. I said only prayer and my belief in God because I've always been brought up a Christian.

Mmm.

Oh he said, what a lot of rot. He said I'm afraid I'm agnostic. That's not going to help you.

Huh.

Well I said you're not going to help me now. I've always loved you as a doctor but now I hate you as a man.

Yeah. And the thing with that is, I was listening to a radio program last week saying that what people need is more spirituality in their lives.

[Dot: Of course.]

So did I. I thought I hope Dr [name deleted] is listening to this; that made me go all goosey again.

So you heard the radio program too. Mmm, [laughs] mmm.

So that really hurt me and from then on I went to Dr [name deleted] and he has been lovely. [Claps her hands together.]

[Dot: He comes here Tuesdays.]

Every other Tuesday.

As a house call?

Yes.

Mmm.

[Dot: Always has.]

And he's been a lovely, lovely, lovely doctor.

Mmm. Did Dr [name deleted] do that?

No, no.

Mmm.

Oh no.

Mmm.

No this has only happened since [pause] you see I cared for [husband's name deleted] for two years and Dr [name deleted] come every fortnight to see him.

Mmm.

And more if I needed him. [Pause] I have taught myself or [name deleted] and [name deleted]'s taught me how, how to touch the little knobs up there [indicating the buttons on the phone].

[Dot: Phone.]

Mmm.

For the doctor and ambulance and fire and [name deleted]. [Pause.])

Mmm.

Yes, [name deleted]'s mobile, work mobile. And [name deleted] and [name deleted] are right up the other end.

Mmm.

And my sister, [name deleted]'s, right down on the bottom end, bottom corner.

Mmm. So you've just got a one touch [arrangement there]?

Yes, yes. And [name deleted] wanted to get me a bigger one. I said no dear, leave that one. I know just what to do with that one.

[Dot: I've just seen the one though with the big numbers; the same sort of idea but on a bigger scale.]

But I know just now where to touch that one.

[Dot: Yeah. I'm aware of that.]

To get [name deleted] and [name deleted] and [name deleted] at work and my brother, [name deleted]; I know how to get him, so I'm happy with that,

Mmm.

But if I want to ring somebody else I grab somebody when they come in, a friend. Because I have so many friends, so many dam of [husband's name deleted]'s friends ...

[Dot: Pop in.]

Pop in. They asked me after [husband's name deleted]'s funeral, would you like us to still come and see you. I said look, [name deleted], [name deleted], well he used be a cancer patient at the Royal, well he used to come every week and dear old Irishman named [name deleted], he used to come every week and a man named [name deleted]. And they still come.

Mmm.

And [name deleted] and his wife used to take me for a walk, right, because [name deleted] early on, a wonderful, Jan ... I caught him pulling out weeds this morning, in the garden.

Huh.

And I was out there banging a stake in yesterday and [name deleted] who when she come over she said, what the devil are you doing. And I said well I want to tie this lily up, I said and I'm banging this in to put a bit of ...

[Dot: Rope round.]

Twine round it. And I did.

So what's the problem with your eyes?

Macular degeneration.

Oh dear. So you've got the peripheral but not the detail?

Mmm, oh well, there's no sight in this one.

Right.

This one I can see, oh, I couldn't even describe you [pause] really well.

Mmm.

Only that you've got blonde hair.

Oh.

And a red jacket on.

Mmm-mmm.

I couldn't say what colour your eyes are dear. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Yeah.

But ah ...

[Dot: That's hereditary we've found out, haven't we.]

So this is something where there's a problem with the blood vessels?

[Dot: Yes.]

Mmm, yeah.

Mmm.

[Dot: She had a couple of eye operations but one went horribly wrong.]

Yes.

Oh that's why, mmm.

Yeah so, Dr [name deleted], when [name deleted] told me to go to him she said, I don't think you can go to a better one. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Yes I, I went to [name deleted].

Yeah, gee he's nice.

I had a benign thing removed from my eye.

He's really nice. I had that [inaudible] first.

[Dot: He has a lovely bedside manner.]

Yeah, and he's really nice. And he doesn't want to see me for 12 months. So I said well all I hope is, I don't go blind before fall off the perch.

Mmm.

And he said oh you, no; I don't think you will, now you're 82. I think he said you'll still have a little bit of sight when that time comes.

Mmm.

He said and there's no one can tell us that. And [lowers voice] I said, oh no I know that but ...

Mmm.

Oh well we've just got to take things as they come Jan, haven't we.

Mmm, yeah and so you feel safe living here?

Oh yes, yes I could [pause] tie my eyes up and I could still find my way round here.

Mmm, yeah but it must be hard for you to get out of the house though.

Oh.

You don't get out of the house?

I don't get out of the house at all unless somebody takes me and I can put my arm through somebody's arm like that.

Or you'd fall?

And then I can walk right round the block.

Mmm, yeah.

I wouldn't be able to walk on my own. Oh I've got the little pusher there. Oh. [Somebody comes to the door.]

Here she comes. I'll turn it off. [Turns tape off.]

So you must know quite a few of your neighbours?

Oh yes, oh yes. My brother-in-law lives here. He's never married

Uh.

But he's got a partner [inaudible] and uh and uh I know the people up there but I don't see them. But the people over on the other side of the road, they're very, very nice.

[Dot: They've been there forever too.]

Yes they've been there for ages. Matter of fact she was here yesterday afternoon.

Mmm.

And my neighbours are all wonderful; and the people next door, I don't see them because they're ...

[Dot: Hermits. [Laughs.]

Yeah. They're queer. [Laughs.]

[Dot: And [name deleted] lives around the road.]

Yes, [name deleted] walks every day.

[Dot: Yes.]

So [name deleted] comes to see you every day?

Oh she comes two or three times a week.

Mmm-mmm.

Yes she's, I don't know what I'd do without her but they're going to live, go round to [name of suburb deleted].

[Dot: One day.]

Yes, one day, but oh ah, as we said to one another the other day, I reckon we'll both, we'll probably be at [inaudible] hill by then. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

[Dot: That's a lawn cemetery.]

[Laughs.]

So [name deleted]'s going to take you to [name of suburb deleted]?

Oh no, no.

[Dot: That's where they're going to live.]

[Name deleted] *lives, with her daughter and son-in-law.*

Oh, right.

And they're building a new house in [name of suburb deleted].

Oh, right.

And they live just round the road here.

Ah, so then you'll lose [name deleted]?

Yeah, I'll lose [name deleted]. But she's not allowed to go, are you [name deleted]? [Laughs.]

[Visitor: I'm what?]

[Name of suburb deleted]!

You're not allowed to go to [name of suburb deleted] are you?

[Visitor: Well I dunno; me age might catch up with me first.]

[Laughs.]

I reckon.

[Laughs.]

[Visitor: I hope it's going to be built, but I like it here.]

[Laughs.] *Never mind love.*

[Visitor: Not before I fall off me perch.)

Mmm. So sounds like you don't have any problem looking after the house and the yard?

Oh no, no.

Mmm.

No I'm really ...

[Dot: [Name deleted] fixes all the little bits that need doing.]

All my mail goes up to [name deleted] and [name deleted]'s now.

Mmm.

[Interjection deleted.]

And they pay all my accounts for me; hopefully they'll hang out another ... [Laughs.]

[Conversation about mail deleted.]

So you must use the phone a fair bit then?

Oh yes, every day, yes.

[Laughs.]

Oh nearly every day.

[Dot: Rings her sister.]

Because I know my sister, how to get my sister at [name of nursing home deleted].

Mmm, so that's here?

Yeah, well at [name of town deleted].

[Dot: The nursing home.]

Yes and uh, that's where I was thinking about going. I think there's something crawling on my head.

[Dot: It's just your brain's on the move.]

Oh I think it be too because it's still there. It's good to prey on because of my very thin hair like [name of son deleted]. [Laughs.] Now what did you say to me then, Jan.

What was I asking you? What was I saying? [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

[Dot: Scary isn't it.]

Was I asking you about looking after the house?

[Dot: How often do you use the phone?]

Oh the phone.

Oh yes. But never mind I can see to that.

So do you visit your sister very often?

Oh well not very often. I had an offer this morning, my sister-in-law lives at [name of nursing home deleted] too. She's been there quite a while [sighs] and she rang me this morning, [name deleted]. And she said, uh I just rang to see how you are 'cos it's nearly lunchtime. She said I can't talk for very long. I said oh it's lovely to hear from you [name deleted], because I can't get her.

Mmm.

But I can get [name deleted]. And uh, she said well [name deleted] asked me would you like to come down one morning. He'll call and get you one morning and bring you down to [name of nursing home deleted].

Mmm.

And, and if [name deleted] knows, if I know when you're coming, what day can you come and I said on a Monday. I said because Dr [name deleted] comes on a Tuesday and I go to Legacy on Wednesday and I go, I go to pensioners' meeting sometimes on a Thursday.

[Dot: And you've got your housecleaner Friday.]

And the girl comes on a Friday to get the order.

Mmm.

So I said Monday'd be the best day. So he's coming on Monday morning.

[Dot: What about when [name deleted] comes Monday? What time?]

Oh dear, I never thought of that.

So that's one of the other days she comes to clean the house?

[Dot: Yes, Monday, Friday.]

Yes, Monday she comes to clean the house. I'll have to ...

[Dot: Give her a ring.]

Yes, I'll have to ...

Can she come another time?

Tell [name deleted], oh Friday'd be the best day.

Mmm.

[Dot: Is he coming morning or the afternoon?]

In the morning and when they know I'm coming they can order my meal. I said no, no, I'll take my sandwiches down and she said, no you won't.

[Dot: Nooo.]

She said no, if we have a visitor ...

[Dot: They allow that.]

They will bring you a little bit of lunch.

[Dot: Could [name deleted] come in the afternoon if I ring her?]

No, no. I think I might have told her Friday.

[Dot: OK. But you're going out Monday.]

Yeah. No, I think I remembered to tell her that, Jan.

[Dot: Oh good.]

And I said no Friday would be the best day [name deleted].

[Dot: To go?]

Yes.

[Dot: Oh.]

To go down to uh ...

[Dot: Why would it be Friday when [name deleted] comes Friday [pause] and Monday?]

She does come Friday and Monday too. Oh well, we'll have to work that out won't we?

[Dot: Well sort it out tomorrow and ring someone.]

Yes.

Yes, so have you been to [name of nursing home deleted] before?

Oh I've been down there a lot.

And what's it like?

Oohh, well Dr [name deleted] said to me before, [pause] oh before [husband's name deleted] passed away when [name deleted] was in there for [pause] respite, he said you ought to go down.

When you get the chance nip down to see [name deleted], get someone to take you. He said it is absolutely beautiful. It's the best rest home in Australia, not just Tasmania.

[Dot: Beautiful.]

I can't go in there myself and find [name deleted].

Mmm.

[Dot: Bit of a rabbit warren.]

It's beautiful.

Mmm.

Jan I couldn't describe to you. It's so lovely but I wouldn't want to go there.

[Laughs.]

I'd sooner this.

[Dot: It's your choice.]

Because when I can't sleep I toddle out here at quarter past two or three o'clock in the morning and make my milk hot and sit here.

Mmm.

I done the wrong thing one night. I made the milk hot and I used to always take it back in the bedroom. Why I was so stupid to do that I don't know, but I did. And I turned round. Must've turned round a little bit quick, over there where the microwave is where I made the milk hot and, over I went. Up in the air went the milk, down over me head.

Mmm.

And then I had strip off at half past two in the morning

Oh.

And go and have a shower. And next thing I knew I was lying under the floor, under the table.

Mmm.

And I didn't hit my head,

Mmm.

So how I didn't hit my head I don't know.

But you fell?

I fell.

Mmm.

Yes but I didn't hurt myself.

Mmm.

So after that Dr [name deleted] said to me would I like one of those things to wear around my neck?

Yes so I'm going to get one.

Oh. So this happened fairly recently?

Mmm, yes, not long ago.

Mmm.

But I've never had another fall and it was only my own stupidity, for turning around too quick.

[Dot: But they're handy if you have a fall when you can't get to the phone.]

Yes.

Yes.

But I said what if [name deleted] and [name deleted] are down at their shack at [name of town deleted]?

Mmm.

[Dot: We've got that connection fixed up now.]

Oh yes.

So it'll go through to someone else?

[Dot: No. We've got a CDMA phone.]

Oh, oh so it'll go through to you.

[Dot: Yes.]

Yes. He said, no you can get me; you can get [name deleted].

Mmm.

And ambulance, and there was another one. There's four.

So you get four calls on it?

Yes.

[Dot: They're all coded. If the first one rings out or doesn't answer it goes to the next.]

Yes.

Oh.

[Dot: Get the help.]

Yes, so I've decided I'm going to get one now. So I have to get a, uh [pause] what do you call it from Dr [name deleted]?

[Dot: Permission slip.]

It's written on a piece of paper there.

[Dot: A letter?]

I wrote it down. I have to get a s ... [pause], referral, that's the word.

[Dot: Oh yes.]

I have to get a referral from Dr [name deleted].

[Dot: Oh, for the podiatrist?]

Oh that's for the podiatrist, yes.

[Dot: Yes, but you need a referral too to get this particular device?]

Yes. Yes, I guess [name deleted] 'll ring me about that.

So you get that for free, there's no cost with it?

I don't know.

[Dot: Ah yeah, there is a charge.]

It used to be \$80 odd I think.

[Dot: I think there's a monthly charge.]

You see when I went to the podiatrist, Jan, the other day after he'd done my nails I said how much do I owe you [name deleted] and he said \$36 thanks and I said but I've got a gold card.

Mmm.

He said oh well you don't need to give me anything.

Mmm.

But he said I need

[Dot: A referral.]

Urgently a referral from Dr [name deleted].

Mmm.

[Dot: He's saying she requires that sort of thing.]

It's complicated isn't it?

Oh well.

[Laughs.]

Ugh. It certainly is. That's why I write it down but when I write things down I can't read them.

[Laughs.]

[Dot: That's all right, we read 'em.]

When someone rings me sometimes they'll say now write down my number [pause] and after I've finished talking to them they say, now tell me what my number is.

Oh.

And [laughs] I have to say, sorry I can't tell you. I haven't got my sight.

[Laughs.] Oh to read it back to them, yes.

Yes, yes.

Yeah, [indicating tape recorder] that'd be a good idea, yeah.

[Dot: A little recorder?]

Yeah, you could say it into it.

Oh.

Have all your little daily reminders on a tape [laughs].

[Laughs.]

[Dot: It's the wireless you love don't you?]

Oh yes. Oh, that's, I spend all my time listening to the ABC Jan.

Mmm.

[Dot: It's three o'clock.]

Ah, [name deleted] has it.

[Dot: We haven't changed the date.]

So is there anything you don't like about living here?

Oh no. I love it here.

[Laughs.]

I love it here. It's been my refuge. Yeah, my home all my married life.

But [lowers voice] it must be different since your husband died?

Oh it's terrible Jan.

You're still getting over it?

[Lowers voice] *still getting over it. I guess you never get over 59 years together.*

Yeah, so you must miss him a lot.

I miss him terribly. Because Dr [name deleted] used to say ah you'll be all right, you'll be all right. He's your eyes and you're his brawn because I could still do all cooking and everything. I cooked a great meal for [name deleted] the other day.

So you were working together when he was still alive?

Oh yes, he'd do all the veggies, working. [Name deleted]'s the same. He does things for [name deleted] doesn't he?

[Conversation deleted.]

[Husband's name deleted] *was*, [husband's name deleted] *was in the navy for six years.*

Yes, they learn to be very neat.

Yes, my word.

They've got to store everything away.

Something else he taught me. He saw me putting sugar and milk in someone's tea one day and after they'd gone he said, don't you ever do that again.

Mmm.

I said, what? He said sugar and milk anybody's tea. He said just leave a cup and saucer and spoon there and the sugar and milk's on the table.

Mmm.

Don't ever do that.

Let them do as they like.

Mmm, yes. He was taught that in the Navy, so he taught me.

So what do you do if you feel lonely?

Oh, I just listen to the wireless.

Mmm, 'cos you can't watch the TV.

No I can't.

Mmm.

Can't watch anything on the TV. No, I put that little one in there and I sit on my little chair and that's where I spend nearly all my time.

Mmm, and what do you listen to on the radio?

ABC.

Mmm, it's very good isn't it?

Yes.

I listen to it when I can too.

Yes, I listen to the ABC all the time and they had a story on it ... when I go to bed I do the same and when ten o'clock comes Tony Gilroy come on, he said now [lowers voice] *my whole story tonight will be about bowel cancer.*

[Dot: Oohh! Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *I turned it off while he was on for that hour.*

[Dot: Oh you might have heard something that I didn't know about.]

Yes, mmm.

[Dot: You could've been clued up.]

No, no. I didn't want to hear about it.

[Dot: Oh.]

Because I might start crying and I certainly didn't want to do that so I just so I just lay there.

[Dot: It's a treatable thing now.]

Oh yes.

[Dot: Big time.]

Yes, yes he said uh, he said it's the most, I did hear him say when he gave a little preview of it the night before, it's the most ah curable one anyone can get.

[Dot: Mmm.]

Most of them are slow growing and the thing is to detect it.

If it's caught in time, yes.

The thing is to detect it.

Yes. [Pause.] *So that's my life Jan.*

Mmm.

And I had a lovely happy childhood, one of eleven kids.

Mmm, so even though you lost your mother you still?

Yes I lost my mother in her forties but then I had a lovely stepmother.

Mmm, and stepsisters and brothers as well?

[Dot: Mainly sisters.]

Well there were six of us still at home when my mother died, under 16 and luckily the 16 year old son was [name deleted] and he was a real Mum's boy and he used to help her a lot in the house because the other girls in the house were married and he was the oldest, you know. He was the 16 year old and then my brother, [name deleted] and then [name deleted], the one that's in [name of nursing home deleted], and then me and then [name deleted] and [name deleted]. But yes that was the six and [name deleted] looked after all of us until Dad got [name deleted]'s Mum to look after us and uh then we had her for ah...

She married your father?

Yes.

Mmm, and how many children did she have when she?

Ah well they had one and called her [name deleted].

Oh, they had one between them but she had children of her own.

Oh yes, [name deleted] and her brother, [name deleted].

Yes. So that became eight children and then the nine?

Yes. [Pause.]

Mmm-mmm.

Yes and she used to do all the washing and everything, lovely cooking. She was a lovely, lovely stepmother.

Mmm.

Yes she really was. No we had a really happy family, lived on a farm; had everything you know as far as food and clothes.

This was at [name of town deleted]?

Yes.

[Dot: Grew all your own stuff?]

Yes. Dad had an orchard.

So you must know a lot of people around here?

Yes, oh, not so many now Jan because so many new people come here, you know, to live.

[Dot: It changes.]

Yeah, because it's so close to Hobart people can commute.

Yes.

And the houses are affordable.

Yes, and up where I was bred and born at [name of town deleted], they say now it's a real little township.

Mmm.

[Dot: Mmm, a lot of new homes've gone up.]

It and [name of town deleted], you know where [name of town deleted] is?

[Conversation deleted.]

[Dot: On the highway going out of the [name deleted]]

You can see from there, yeah.

It's a beautiful area.

Yes, [name deleted] took me up there one day before, when she could still drive and uh but it was quite different then. But oh, I wouldn't be able to see much now anyway.

[Dot: It's changed a lot.]

What's the point in going?

[Dot: It's changed a lot since they sold the mail route.]

But no, I manage here really well Jan.

Yuh, it looks like you do. It's a very neat little house. I think we can stop because ...

[Turns tape off.]

Interviewee 19

How long have you lived here?

Since 1984.

Mmm, and can you tell me about where you used to live before you moved here?

I [pause] returned to England [pause] from Queensland and lived there for four years while my mother was frail until she went into a nursing home. I'd always wanted to live in Australia. Uh, England was home but, I'd been away too long; nice to live there but not, not as a permanent thing.

Mmm.

So.

So how long had you been in Australia? When did you first come here?

I came to Australia in '73 and that was at the University of Queensland, and that was a very interesting and a very demanding kind of situation, and I sort of, I suppose, I'd rather burned out before I finished my second term. I was a Head, and before that I was in Canada, not too long in Canada; and before that twelve years in the States.

Mmm.

So I'd left England for the first time in [pause] 19 [pause] 55.

Mmm-mmm.

So I'm very much [inaudible].

So you've had experience of different cultures before coming here.

Yes, but all English speaking for the most part.

Mmm, and so what led to your coming to live in this house?

Uh, because I wanted to come back to [pause] Australia but I didn't want to go anywhere as hot, so Tasmania was a, was a compromise and the friend I shared the house, did a recky and came over here and had a look in Tasmania; could organise so she could make her base of operation in Tasmania, so it was a happy compromise really.

Mmm, so you came here to work here?

I didn't have a job to come to.

Mmm, mmm.

I never really found it that difficult to, to get work. I suppose, I did have to accept that professionally, so it was a real step down but in many ways it was a real challenge because there was no longer the status kind of thing that came from being an academic [laughs]. It was the sheer reality of [pause] what it was like at the coalface.

So what work did you do when you came?

I was an occupational therapist.

Did you work as an occupational therapist?

Mmm.

Mmm.

First at the [name deleted]; it was silly to have taken it, and then at [name deleted] which was aged care.

Mmm.

It was grim days and I think I really ended up by being a great stirrer, because I hadn't got a great deal to lose I felt by that time, and I felt that things needed to change.

So when were you at the [name deleted]? What years?

I would've there from '84 to '86.

Mmm, and then you were with aged care after that?

Yes, yes.

And so when did you retire?

I sort of phased out. I went on a series of round Australia, round the world trips and everyone said that this time she's going to retire, but I really liked working and I, I was working by that time as a, a consultant on aged care down at [name of nursing home deleted].

Yes.

The nursing home, which was run by a friend of mine at the time, and she was very flexible. I would go away and come back and cut down my days and, do the sort of projects; and it was a very nice way to retire.

Mmm.

I sort of eased my way out and finally went off and when I came back I said, really I think I'm ready to retire now.

And what age was that?

Oh, I was 63 when I retired.

Mmm, and what do you like about living here?

[Pause.] *Because it's got the light, the mountains, the river and the bush which are really elements that I like; so I like the fact that the house sort of sits clearly related to the outside.*

Mmm.

And yet when I pull the blinds and light the fire, it's a very cosy little house inside too. So it's, it's a nice mix and it's really, it's only 15 minutes into town.

Mmm.

It's, I mean it gives a sense of being on its own but it's actually very close to a neighbour. So it's got quite a number of things, independent, busy, without actually being too isolated.

Yes coming out here I was wondering how isolated it would be.

I mean it's changed. When, when we bought the house here in '84 there were only about 15 people in [name deleted] and you could be welcomed to the community at morning tea and people did that.

Mmm and did you get to know everybody?

Did get to know people, but that was sort of left over I think from when the bridge went down because it still had that sort of sense but as soon as the Bowen Bridge went in then people started building on their lots and things changed [stressed], quite considerably, but it is still an entirely commuter area.

So people aren't here during the day?

No, no.

Mmm.

One older person I knew, that was the reason he chose to move and I was terribly surprised when he moved but, though it proves ...

Laughs.

But he said, I've met more people in [name of suburb deleted] in one morning than I meet in [name of suburb deleted] in a month. It is in that sense it's, it's quite remote.

Yeah, [pause] so, but you're out a lot anyway, so.

Yes, I am and I suppose I am really aware that I am out a lot and maintaining a social network on the whole means that I go [stressed] more than people come here.

Mmm.

And that is going to be a real disadvantage because, this is the end [stressed] of the sort of social network. You go; you don't shop in [name of nearest shopping centre deleted] for instance. You go to [name of suburb deleted]. You go to [name of another suburb deleted] to shop, which is the closest. I go to the gym at Friends. I go to, University of the Third Age in [name of suburb deleted]. Now everything is 15 minutes away.

Mmm.

And that's quite [stressed] a lot of driving in the future; and I have to be realistic about that. I don't think I should drive beyond the point when really I feel competent to drive. And I'm quite [stressed] comfortable driving after dark. I haven't any problem at the moment but ...

But once people get [to] 80, often things start to affect their driving.

That's right and I think you know, that's ten years away but time goes very fast these days. [Laughs.]

It does. [Laughs.] So you have been thinking ahead about those kinds of things.

Well I have. When [friend's name deleted] died last year, and I mean she'd had a diagnosis of cancer for years and so you know she knew [stressed] she was not going to live long but I never really thought seriously about what I was going to do. Intermittently I would because the idea of some sort of co-op thing is something that I think is a very good idea.

Mmm.

The idea of going into any sort of retirement village, which is supervised by a church group, just fills me with horror [stressed].

[Laughs.]

You know it's not just the going into a retirement village but most of them are either owned as an enterprise by a senior developer or [stressed] [name of retirement village deleted] is the Catholic Church or [name of another retirement village deleted] which is you know, heaven knows what the board of [name deleted] is, but you know to have a name like that, sounds like they're pretty [pause; apparently trying to be politically correct] extravagant. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Well I've had a chance to talk to some of those people.

Yes.

And just off the top of my head they did say to me well, we had certain expectations when we moved in here and it's not all as we'd like it to be. We think some things are good but some things could be improved.

Ah, ah, well I've watched a couple of friends who felt it was a good idea to move.

Mmm.

And I don't think they're quite as adventuresome and independent as they [pause] used to be, I mean adapting to a status that has changed. I think the very fact that there's someone you can call to do things is lovely, but I think at the same time that you've changed your role and relationship to people and I ...

Mmm, it changes your identity doesn't it?

Yeah, it does and I really thought, you know [pause] ...

And you just might become more cast in the role of old person than who you are.

Yes, and also there's a change in terms of, of, of ownership and control of your own space.

Mmm.

Ah, it's their garden plan and you pay for maintenance. Great in one way, but, but, but it'd be great [sound of her dog snoring] [laughs] and I'm not sure about you [looking at her dog], how welcome you'd be.

Someone that'll snore. [Laughs.]

You're part of the household aren't you?

Ah so yes and so you'd need room for your dog, yeah.

And she's big but she's quiet.

Mmm and my sense about that, and this is a different sort of conversation, but I just like them to go the way, to go ... is we need to discuss this at the meeting. Because they had various complaints about aspects of the housing and my sense was well, if people get together at the outset and plan what they want they don't have those issues about the housing not exactly meeting what they want because they've been involved in planning it and they plan it as best they can to meet their lifestyle.

Mmm.

And also it costs.

Yes.

Mmm, so if you've got more money you can have a bigger place, or you know you can have extra things than if things were tight. But if things are tight you've still got an option to have your own place. If you plan it yourself.

I think so. The idea of having to spend so much on what seems to be relatively poorly designed space in terms of what I would want and I have looked. [Laughs.] I went to Vacluse just to have a look some years ago.

Mmm.

And it wasn't just ... It, it was a nice little house.

Mmm.

You know one of the ones that had been converted on one of the streets off Davey.

Mmm.

It didn't look as if it belonged to that large complex.

But they're all salmon pink.

No this, this one had retained the façade from the street. Ispahan it was. You wouldn't have known if it had belonged. [Takes a deep breath.] And I thought well really if I wanted any sort of central services, it's miles away.

Mmm.

I mean very, you're moving into a different kind of league I think in terms of finances are concerned because this was going to take all the equity that one got in terms of the house and some [emphasised], plus a fairly hefty kind of maintenance thing on top of that.

Mmm, so it's very expensive.

So I think the majority of retirement villages are really pretty pricey for the majority of people now.

Mmm, so the people I've talked to in the Northern suburbs who've had a \$70,000 house mightn't be no, it's not a prospect for them.

No.

They know they can't afford to get in.

That's right.

And it's only on a pension too. I mean it's a big sacrifice for them to meet the, charges I imagine.

Oh yes. I think, I think there are an enormous number of people who are going to be in that sort of level. The number of people who can move to retirement villages can't be that great.

Mmm.

Proportionately.

[Conversation deleted.]

Yes.

So do you feel safe here?

Yes I do, very. Periodically, and I don't think they're bad. They're wild kids, [laughs] do tend to knock over the garbage can and knick the sign but it doesn't make me feel unsafe. I'm so pleased you can call Neighbourhood Watch. It is really very good.

And you've said you know your neighbours and you get on well with them and...

Mmm-mmm.

They are good neighbours.

Yes, but I've still got to work out a system because the system we had before ... because my bedroom's in the front and I can't see my neighbours there. [Name deleted]'s was at the side and she could. And she [pause] had the arrangement with [name deleted], if the blind didn't go up then if I was away, [name deleted] would always come over and see how she was.

Mmm- mmm, oh because she was unwell.

Because ... but it was just a really neighbourly kind of thing.

Mmm.

And she also had a ... She was much more nervous than I was and I had a cottage up at [name of town deleted] so I was often away up there. And used to go you know, back to England for long holidays. So she was really on her own more often but she had a whistle and this blind arrangement and it was a sort of nice neighbourly sort of thing that yes, you could get some assistance if you needed it, but they weren't able to speak.

And we talked of having a similar kind of thing so I could have a blind that went up and down in the bathroom so she could or like in England if we took milk bottles in it was kind of a signal that somebody wasn't well. I like that kind of neighbourliness.

And in a lot of retirement villages people do that and in cohousing people do that as well.

Yuh and I think that's genuinely what Neighbourhood Watch is about. And I think it's partly why this Taste of the Tasmania that we have is considered to be such a pleasant. It's a way of increasing that kind of contact.

Mmm.

I've noticed particularly that they're careful to make use that I still feel included, you know even though it would be, you know they'd say don't you, don't you bother to have the group here you know we'll, we'll accommodate you which in some ways, is saying that you need two people to do things.

Oh right, so since [name deleted] has died.

Yes and I feel for heaven's sake, what do the men do to make the food. [Laughs.] It's not that much of a difference but there is a sense of, you know the careful inclusion, which I think is nice.

Mmm.

I don't, I don't mind that.

So you're the oldest resident here?

Yes, yes, there is Mrs [name deleted], is much older. She's just beyond the range of this little group and had you know, never sort of made the sort of effort to be part of things.

And does she live on her own?

She does now.

Mmm. Is she a widow now?

Yes.

So it must be difficult for her then if she doesn't know the neighbours very well?

Yes and I sometimes I think, well I'm involved in something at the moment, you know this is digressing but ...

[Conversation deleted.]

A group of us did a submission to Clarence Council to get Clarence Council's view to see how effective a thought it was. And we went very carefully through this and said they would need to have a plan for positive ageing and they needed to consult because they have a great many older ... And they were very cavalier about their response and clearly weren't taking it seriously which was a mistake, because if you do that you get people to be more likely to take action. So we're really beginning now to look at the sort of issues older people have and safety was one.

Mmm.

And having taken it upon ourselves, we were going to have to start looking at what are some of the mechanisms for building and I think part of it is, is gently trying to develop neighbourliness so that older people do get to know their neighbours.

Mmm.

And maybe it is something that older people can do, is to identify the older people in the neighbourhood and say, who do you know and what do you do to sort of help and I'm ... I did a little course at U3A, and a lecture that I was asked to do on independent living, just to see how many people had got something like that.

Mmm.

Because not too many people really told about it, not safety in terms of staying independent. Oh I know I've got to ... safety in terms of that, I've still got to have a rail put on the front steps and I'm avoiding doing that.

So as an occupational therapist you'd be well and truly aware of those sorts of things.

[Laughs.]

I'm very aware of that and when an OT came to visit she said that's an illegal ramp. I said I know it is. I only use it to bring my wood up that ramp but I believe it is too; it's too short.

So you had an OT come? What was that for?

Oh she came to see [name deleted].

Oh, when she was unwell, to see how she was managing?

Yes, yes and I thought, oh god I don't want to do anything you know. She obviously, she had what she needs and I hoped she would agree. She was extremely nice and a nice little handyman is going to make the rail, because it's two steps. Not so much for me I think but to be preventive. But I do have frail friends who visit and it's not safe.

Mmm, so the group that went to the Council, was that a U3A group?

Not entirely. We contacted all the people that we thought might be activists and tried not to get people representing their particular community group, but more people that we thought might be interested in this and get a cross spectrum of people, most of them belonged to U3A. I mean that was probably [name deleted]'s network as much as anything else. I mean we did miss out one or two people that we should have included obviously.

Mmm, so what don't you like about living here?

I really don't like the fact that I can't get the garden under control. It's an anchor, and try as I will to have it reverting to bush uh, the weeds grow and I can't quite ignore it.

Mmm.

So that [inaudible] close to how much compromise I can really live with in terms of... I could do all of those sorts of things. I could do a lot of the maintenance kind of things but I'm not quite sure how to cope with the size of the garden.

Mmm.

And I have got this very nice dyslexic chap that comes and helps; so it probably is the best idea.

Mmm.

To hire people in.

Mmm.

To do what helps me to meet the standards because I really don't, I can justify ... the garden is not good for arthritis [laughs] and tell myself particularly in winter it's too painful to get out there [laughs].

And I suppose there are things you enjoy doing more as well?

There are other things I enjoy doing more, yes there are.

So you can afford to pay a certain amount at least?

I can at the moment and I think it's, I mean I weigh that up and I, I thought actually the number of hours you can get assistance and things, it's very much cheaper than making a move, a move is an enormously expensive kind of thing and unless there's somewhere I really want to move to, I would much rather spend the money on staying here.

Unless it was something that offered something a lot better than what you've got?

Yes, it would really have to be, I'm not quite sure what but a very different sort of lifestyle, I would think. I can't see myself just suddenly going into a unit. I think it would have to be a rather special place. I've always had rather nice special places and I wouldn't like to, it's not the time of life to go down.

So what?

Yeah I think we've covered that really well.

I think we've covered most of the issues quite well because I can't see anything here...

There's no particular impediment to you staying here in this house as far as making changes to the house goes. And the things that you are happy, aren't happy about are the things that you can't change, about like where the house is and the size of this bit of land.

Mmm, mmm, yes and I think those are two things that I, when a genuine alternative is available I can move knowing that it's a very sensible thing to do, but to move for the sake of moving when this is, this is home.

Mmm.

I would really have to make sure that it was genuinely something ... that I could recreate that sense. I think there's far more for me to where I live than just convenient bricks and mortar; but I couldn't just be close to Coles or something.

Mmm, so the main problems for you from what you say are ... it's about if you get to a stage where you can no longer drive.

Mmm.

You would have a problem living here you think; or say your arthritis was a lot worse

Mmm.

And you might find even the house itself, I don't know, I think a lot of people still manage because there are ways you can scale down and simplify your life.

Yes and it's really a very, and one of the things we did put in was to have uh, central heating put in as soon as, well as soon as [name deleted] retired because I said I'm not going to be interested in, in hauling wood and splitting wood. I know that that's something over time I would find difficult to do and, and she clearly wasn't going to be able, able to do it indefinitely and the heating panels really work well.

Mmm.

No more expensive wood and relatively non ... sort of, intrusive.

Yeah

And that has made a lot of difference in terms of being able to use the whole house.

So the whole house is heated?

No, not the ... the bedrooms aren't. You know but sort of using the study and here, I sort move in from my shed in the winter. Then I don't feel particularly comfortable working out there oddly enough.

So you've got a shed?

Oh I've got a shed out there.

And what do you do in your shed?

Well textiles is my hobby you see and I, I ... Now that's another thing, because I used to be very messy so I was sort of banished to the shed. Well now I can spread. I've got the whole of the study now, which used to have to be a shared space.

And that is heated too?

Yeah that is heated too.

Well that's good. If, it still must be reasonably expensive to heat that amount of space and I suppose you don't have options. Can you turn one bit of it off?

Oh I can turn it off yes because they're all, there's a thermostat for the ones in here but the study is independent, the one in the hall's independent, the bathroom's independent; so you can close the door if you like but it's actually no more expensive to heat than when we were working and lighting the fire when we came in, so I think it's still probably a fairly cost effective option. Financially I'm [pause] fine although I think I'm rather a poor manager.

So you've got superannuation?

I have a whole series of bits of superannuation and pension but I'm not an Australian pensioner.

Mmm.

So that's also to some degree a bit of a disadvantage because some things you can only get, some resources are only available to pensioners and some of these are not necessarily financial ones. They're really being able to access information, to, you know being sort of well, the way in which ... it's not welfare it's more the way that social services operate on the basis that social services for older people are an economic thing where in many cases they are not. It's a question of ... and housing I think is typical of it, the running the gauntlet of getting rid of your house and planning and doing another one is something many people won't risk doing.

Mmm.

I know [name deleted] who you probably know, who lives up there in a very [stressed] steep place in [name of suburb deleted]; but none of us bless her, I don't really like driving her back there because I find that's such a difficult area you know to turn when I'm taking her close to her house, but she doesn't have, she just has a pension, so she's really much more in the position of having to, look at where she's going to move to.

She can't really stay there?

She really can't stay there; and if you don't drive and you're on a steep block and you've got to carry everything and when your friends are getting less keen on going there because it's just that ... I mean I don't mind but I find I get tired if I have to go and pick people off or drop them off and it makes another sort of hour on the day when you're doing things.

So, one answer to these problems both for you and [name deleted], although she's probably got more problems than you have, is if there was some form of community transport for older people, that was affordable and appropriate and you know available.

Mmm.

I mean there wouldn't be such an issue would there? Apparently they've got quite a good one in [name of town deleted]. I was interviewing some people in [name of town deleted] yesterday, and it's been set by I think the [name deleted] Church but it's run through the [inaudible], most of them are run through the Council. And if they need to go somewhere they can just ring up and you know they've got a lift and they just pay a certain amount.

So I think that, I think that's a very realistic thing because I think people need to start thinking more about, do I have to move because of transport. Do I have to move because of the size of the garden, which is what I have said?

Or is there another way?

Or is there really another way? I think what I will miss and I hadn't noticed it until the other day, was not only will it be me who drives, but I can't entertain my friends because they're not going to come here and even now it's, let's play Mah-jong at [name deleted]'s and I thought, yes it used to rotate, even last year we used to take it in turns and we really quite liked doing that. I mean not always having to go to someone else's and take the bottle sort of thing. And I thought now [stressed]) that's going to happen more frequently, that we're going to use accessible houses more and more because it's easier for everybody to get there. You won't go to you know, so-and-so's, because you're have to climb the stairs ...

Mmm.

You're not going to go because so-and-so doesn't have any parking. It's all saying the social network is dependent on easy access.

Mmm.

A friend of mine lives just around the corner from [name deleted] School and we go there to gym, after gym or swimming we go round to [name deleted]'s for coffee. She has a great social life. She doesn't have a car but ...

Ah, but it's convenient for people to go there.

Mmm, and I've been thinking there's a lot to be said for locating yourself where you're on the dropping in route.

Mmm.

Cos I know I'm not going to be on the dropping in route unless people come down from Launceston or Triabunnah, then the drop in, but anyone else [pause], they're coming here to see you specifically.

Mmm.

And that, it's quite nice, dropping in on my way past and I do that for other people but that kind of informal social support is a very important thing for seniors these days irrespective of whether or not you've got family and a lot of people don't have family that are doing that sort of thing. They'll come when they're needed but it's not the same thing as somebody to do things with.

Or someone who's a peer; someone who actually shares your interests and values.

That's true and I think a lot of people have been saying that, that you actually get more support from your friends and certainly from talking with several friends who were widows and they were all saying they got more support from their friends. Their children couldn't understand and sisters who were still married didn't understand [laughs] you know, their sort of, that grief and so on that you needed to feel [inaudible] so and so yeah.

I think that's a really important point, I think.

[Conversation deleted.]

So what does home mean to you?

Oh good gracious. I should get what I wrote. I'll get it.

[Turns tape off.]

I think retirement in an odd way; it's fairly easy to have a lot of experience wiped out. I mean there's a tendency to put retired people who are volunteers in one ... basket and ...

So undervalue the skills that are available?

Yes

Mmm

And the, the ... particularly when you volunteer; and you want post retirement to use the skills that you've really got. You tend to be going back to areas of those sort of skills and the problem with that can sometimes be that it creates difficulties with people who are working in those areas and in some ways, sometimes it can be; well you really have to recognise that you know you've done your dash and that other people are, now have the responsibility of moving things forward. But there's the other one where quite clearly when you're the consumer of experiences I think a lot of aged areas that are really a

failure, to find a proper role for people who are retired, and are bringing not only their experience but their retirement experience with them.

Mmm.

And it's this sort of planning for older people when the third age is a very active group of people and you've got a huge number of people who are volunteers and active and interested and it's very often ...

That they're marginalised?

I think so and there's no real expectation either in a sense that we should be actively involved in doing other than having a very good time [laughs.]

Laughs.

I mean it is a good time but at the same time I think there are ways in which [pause] I don't quite know how to put it because in some ways you're told stop drinking, lose weight and do all those kind of things.

And exercise.

And exercise and people are telling you how to grow old and, and at that same time there's the conflicting sort of image which is, is frail and dependent and used by, and I suppose I could make up my own mind whether I exercised or not. Now people are rather kind of saying to you to have a healthy old age you really should be doing something about it.

So which people are you talking about? Are you talking about people in U3A or health professionals?

No, I think on the whole health professionals and I know I've done it and I think that, that there's a we-and-they thing. It's much more difficult for people to say "we" when they're solving problems. You're the consumer or you're the old person and I'm the person with the job, the information and the responsibility.

So having been used to being a professional you are now just cast in the role of consumer?

Yes.

Yeah.

And I think well [stressed] you know that's, that's reasonable but at the same time there does not seem to be a very logical role when you are a volunteer but society in one way is saying stay on and work.

Keep productive

Keep being productive, but I think there's another way of saying you know, work, and it's not exactly volunteering it's actually still these are the skills you've got and raising the expectation of people in terms of how you are actually still going to be part of this society.

Mmm.

Maybe that's the ethos that I come from and I still like it so that I'm very busy doing my kind of community service things [laughs].

As with the approach to Clarence Council.

Yes.

But I think you're saying because you're an occupational therapist and because you're now an older person and have some of those experiences that you could have some really good input into planning better services for older people.

I think so.

And the people who see that as their role probably don't have as good a perspective on it as you because they're still working and they're not retired. While they've got that expertise they can't be in the shoes of a retired older person.

I think that's really true and I, I wondered whether or not it was sheerly pig-headedness or whether or not in fact many of the things that I had learned and I certainly noticed that in terms of young professionals close to the end of my career; I thought I've got much more patience and much more willingness to involve people in their own decision I think.

Mmm.

The decisions didn't have to be great but they still had to make their own and there was a sort of realisation that in fact people did have to make their own decisions and I might not like it and I might not be personally able to influence them as much.

Mmm.

It was my job very much to try and get people to be in a decision-making capacity.

Mmm, so have ownership of their own decisions and their own solutions?

Yes and uh and maybe it's because you know I've, I've had that kind of responsibility and I get very cross with some of the sort of U3A people who, who still are quite happy to sit and lecture to you or particularly when they've had a husband who's managed the money and driven the car and where they haven't actually had a working life and I think you know you're bright women who just in a sense... but you haven't felt you've had to be involved in shaping your lives as much and, and you read about all kinds of statistics in terms of aged care and you think the Baby Boomers are behind us and they're going to be very used to determining what they want but, but my generation wasn't.

Mmm.

They were not used to being proactive.

And, what about someone ten or 15 years older than you too?

Even more, very unreasonably accepting sometimes and I used to sort of think, you don't have to put up with that you know.

So these are the people you've been dealing with?

Well, that was when I was working in, in aged care you know. [Inaudible.]

And they do tend to be people who just follow what health professionals tell them, and assume they're the experts and they won't question and they won't put their own view.

Mmm, and I think the whole question and I think consultancy is a very, very difficult thing to do because all you can do is gather information. People don't have to act on it but, I think aged care could in fact be genuinely much more consultive, and I think it would be much less expensive in many ways if people were much more involved.

But we're not only talking aged care are we.

Nuh.

We're talking policies that affect older people. It may not be aged care. It could be the council's healthy ageing policy or it could be housing policies.

That's right and, and I think you know there is a tendency to have aged care to dominate and that's the frail aged and that's a whole five percent of very elderly people. The majority of people are going to be staying at home and, and reasonably active and how the services can be un-proactive and people use their resources.

Mmm.

I think people are beginning to say now, I'm not going to sell it; I'm going to leave it to my children.

Yes, yes.

It's a real shame in terms of, I'm going to go overseas and get a bit more active.

Mmm.

Which means people are going to have higher expectations of their houses.

Mmm.

They're going to want to change them and make them functional. [Inaudible.]

Mmm.

[Conversation deleted.]

I certainly feel you know and that, and that you do have to accept in retirement, you know, that to participate in something you don't have, people will say, I'll fax you something and you say well I don't have a fax, [or] make a copy of something and send it to me. I don't have easy access to a photocopier.

Mmm.

And [pause] and the sort of, I was down at the Health Department doing something one day you know and the only parking place you know close to the Health Department, was really quite expensive and I was having to nip out and, all the time and feed the meter and I thought it's not such a disadvantage for me, but it was for my off-sider who was a real you know ...

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 20

[Tape turned on part way into the conversation.]

I just want to get an idea of, you know, how you came to live here, so uh ...

My husband was war prisoner.

Mmm.

In Germany.

Yeah.

And he come in here in 1948 or '49.

Yes.

Then after that he pay me, here. He know me just through the friends, because he be war prisoner. And I come in here in '61.

Mmm.

Sixty-one or '62.

Oh.

And I have the daughter and we was living in different place then we sell little bit property in our country, in our money, but we bought in here and buyed a block of land.

Yes.

And we built besser.

Mmm.

Hard work.

Yes.

Working through the day in that job, through the night here.

Oh dear.

Yeah.

So both of you were working?

Yeah.

Mmm and what building the house of a night and on weekends?

I was working on the weekends even then because I was working in the nurses' home.

Oh right.

And I have, we are now, five days working then sometimes two days off, sometimes three days off, only it depends upon, you keep the weekends in.

Mmm. Yes.

Yeah.

So you were doing shift work?

Yes, shift work, uh-huh and then's government, what has come in, Whitlam, we have more money because we was allowing the money.

Mmm.

That men!

Mmm.

And by the time I pay for my daughter to looking after her, leave just for living.

Mmm.

Nothing left.

Yes.

But anyway, still better than nothing.

Mmm, mmm.

I was happy to find a job.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Mmm and so how long have you lived here in this house?

In this house? My daughter she was ... now my daughter she's 38, was two and a half years, 35 years, 36 years.

In this house?

That was not finished completely.

Mmm.

We finished first here then after we save and little bit borrow money and finish upstairs; is not easy.

So this is not that first house you built? You actually ...

Yes first house.

This is the one you built when you came here?

Yeah.

Oh right.

But not finish it.

Oh.

Finish it bit by bit.

Mmm and so, but this is unit 1 so, and this is a big house ...

Yeah.

So did you used to live in the other part of the house?

Upstairs, upstairs I was living.

And so who lives up there now?

Uh, nobody.

Oh.

Nobody because I had some tenants which ... one was very rude to me.

Mmm.

And treat me like I am animal not like human being you know.

Mmm.

And say everything you know in ... bad things, through the night in music, in ...

Mmm.

You calling police, police come in and police going back again.

Mmm.

No law.

Mmm

Police no power to do anything to them.

Mmm.

What I think in other people and people just rude because he know he can do that.

Mmm. Yeah well that must have been very difficult.

Very, very difficult; not just me; many, many people is like that.

Mmm.

Yeah.

So it must be very hard renting a place and living downstairs from where you're renting it out.

Yeah.

Mmm.

And with somebody you know who treats us like animal, not like human being like Australian people. I've nationality of Australian.

Mmm.

But still, calling me wog.

Oh, that's ... mmm.

Wog and ...

And you, and you own the house. [Laughs.]

Yes, doesn't matter. He is the boss; him country. He think I am not right. Go back in your country.

Huh, your tenant said that?

Yeah.

Yeah and so did, did you have much trouble getting rid of them? I suppose, did you want them to go?

Yes, many of them. Some in the beginning, when this part of the house apartment was good I have one woman who was living here, first one. She come in with a baby six weeks old and she's gone with the three children.

Oh.

Was beautiful woman, she was working and now her husband working and we have like friends, not like you know.

Mmm.

But after that, up and down.

Mmm, so you've had a few different people in there?

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. We have. Mmm.

So how long was she there, the one that was good?

She were ... oh, about nine years.

Mmm.

Nine years. Some was two years, some three years, some four years but some I give notice after six weeks.

Mmm, mmm.

Just you can't, because you can't put up with that.

Yeah, yeah and so do you try to get a particular kind of person, when you...

I beg your pardon.

Well do you go ... How, how do you get the tenants in? Do you advertise?

Now, nothing, no. I looking in the paper in case I see somebody, where what should be,

Mmm.

But hard to find it.

Mmm. So normally you'd look, if someone's looking for a house to rent?

Yeah.

That's how you do it?

Yes, yeah, because like that you don't have to put in the paper because that be all day, all night, ringing and coming in. Even he doesn't want to see the place, he just want to disturb you.

Yeah, huh, mmm.

Because he doesn't working and all day you know going, disturb the people.

Mmm, mmm.

And through the night, after going in bed, the house.

Another way would be to go through an agent.

Oh, agent's he's crazy for them. He's not many of the ... He go in a way ... Well was the Mr White here in the [name of suburb deleted], was beautiful but after that was some Peter is some, [laughs] not trustable, no. You report to him, he break that; say wearing and tearing.

Mmm.

Excuse, mmm, wearing and tearing in two, three weeks time.

Very?

After two or three weeks time something break and he say wearing and tearing. You understand?

Wear and tear?

Yeah, wearing and tearing.

And so you have to pay for it.

Yes and always what, what you have, you know, money from them, you pay for repairs.

Mmm, yeah, so it's not worth your while doing it then.

No.

Yeah.

In trouble, in blood pressure; if you keep it.

So how long has it been vacant?

Ah, second year now

Mmm.

But that last one was the worst. He mother she used to be friend of mine.

Oh.

[Conversation deleted.]

First in the beginning you know he have the girlfriend and she ring me up.

Mmm

About him you know, because she know it was empty you know. She said, Sofie is your flat still vacant? I say yes. He can come in tonight to have a look. I say no, is not an invitation there. He can't come in. He can come in tomorrow.

Mmm.

She say, all right. Anyway, he come in. Then when he come in, straight away he say I want to move in Sunday or Monday. I say what's happened. Why you in the hurry? Oh, I don't like there. It's wet in there. It's not suitable for me.

Mmm.

You know anyway he move in, in Monday after three days.

Mmm.

He move in like Tuesday night and first day he bring the people, three days after that and all night is big boy in heavy shoe you know and bump, and I say to him, look your kitchen is in the place which one is my bedroom. If you come in through the night would you please after ten o'clock, be gentle.

Mmm.

He say, yes. He put a washing machine in eleven o'clock, in twelve o'clock; Dryer. And she was working in some shop you know, take away and she bring here to make the cake in the morning, bring to people.

Mmm.

And I say, she say that is her job. And I say you didn't say that is her job. My house is a resting house, is not factory.

Mmm.

He say, aahh, I pay rent, I do what I want in here.

Mmm, mmm.

And I say to him no please. I say don't do that, more you say worse you get it and mother she was not, and when I see him there and I say to him, look [name deleted], I think you making trouble in our friendship, in between me and your mother. He say, what for. I'm mature enough to do what I wanted. But is my house and we have that rule and regulation.

Mmm.

And she got it, the car, with a noisy that bumpy you know, old car, and he got a motor cycle, one going in working eleven o'clock, I mean in two o'clock. One going, you don't know where you are.

Mmm.

That was last one and now I don't want to think anymore to take it, anyone.

And how long were they there?

Uh?

How long were they there?

How long? About six weeks, that's all.

[Laughs.]

I give him the notice you know in two weeks time and when I give him notice you know he say what for is that. I say ask yourself, what for is that?

Mmm.

I ask you to be all right, correct, like you see in the contract and you don't want it,

Mmm.

Better for you, better for me.

Mmm.

To have a peace in the house. He was not happy.

Mmm, mmm. Yeah because it's a, it's a nice house isn't it?

Yeah, but you know he think I'm by self you know, woman and for another, doesn't know the law. But law is law. I'm not that much stupid you know. Probably is difference, but I understand a little bit because I go in lot of meetings round, you know.

Yes, mmm, it's very hard.

It's not easy

Yeah.

[Conversation deleted.]

Ah, I've got only a one daughter.

Oh I saw some photos.

That is her.

Oh she's beautiful, mmm, and where's she?

Melbourne.

[Conversation deleted.]

So how long's she been in Melbourne?

Twelve years.

Twelve?

Years.

She is just, she is beautiful, mmm.

That was when she left Tasmania, yeah.

And does she have children?

No, she's not married but she live together with the one boy you know, seven years nearly will be in April.

Mmm, how old is she?

Thirty-eight.

Oh.

And he is 38, a couple of months older than her.

Mmm, so it's getting a bit late to think about having children.

She don't want it because she was thinking to make a wedding with my husband but my husband was very sick about the heart and stroke

Mmm.

And she say now I couldn't care less about the wedding when I can't have wedding like I expect with my father, now I'm not interesting.

Mmm.

She was very close to him.

Mmm and when did he die?

Four years ago. That is my husband in there [indicating photo].

What sort of work did he used to do?

Electrician in [name deleted]; and I been working in the nurses home [inaudible].

[Conversation deleted.]

And what do you like about living here?

I used to now. When I come in, in the beginning it was hard for me to, you know but I've been in there [back to Yugoslavia] and afterwards hard to go in there, different food, different weather, different everything.

So you mean you like, you prefer to live in Australia now?

Yeah, yeah.

You prefer to live in Tasmania?

Now, not to go in there [Yugoslavia]. No I, I, I have only one sister there.

Where is this again in?

In Yugoslavia.

Mmm.

Yeah, but to go in there to live with her, she live with grandchildren and everything. I never used to live like that. But here, I like the food here and I used to this weather.

Mmm.

If I go there that winter, months ago my sister she say was three below zero.

Mmm.

Yeah.

It's not that cold here.

No, was yesterday, or today. Yesterday was cold. Saturday was all right yeah, but yesterday but still better winter here than there.

Mmm.

And now it's too hot in there, 46 degrees hot.

Oh that is hot.

Yeah.

Goodness, that's very hot.

Mmm.

So, but you can heat this really well. I mean you've got a nice gas heater there.

No it's not; oil heater.

Oil heater!

Oil heater, yeah.

Expensive. Is that expensive?

Yes, yes it is but you know I was thinking gas but I waiting for another gas what is coming, that bottled gas I don't like it because you've got to fill it up all the time.

Yes.

But if I am alive I would like to have gas, mmm.

When we get the pipes?

I'm too old, yeah.

But it looks to me like you keep pretty warm in here. So you can manage to afford to pay the power?

Hard, my daughter, very hard.

Ah, your daughter helps you?

Yes she gives me with the bills and something like that, yeah, mmm.

And what sort of job does she have?

Now she lost her job too. She's computer programmer.

Mmm.

But now she wanted to meet some company to sell the computers because she go to university to finish some language, computer language. She know two languages.

Mmm.

But she wanted some more because ... difference come in.

Yeah it changes.

Yeah, mmm.

Mmm.

And I don't want to make trouble to her, you know to ask for money or something because she's short in the money you know and ...

Mmm.

And I want, what he say you know that [inaudible]. If you give to your mother you can give to my mother too.

Oh.

Which is fair enough you know and I never ask him, but if he give it to me thanks, yes.

So if you've got a bill that you've had trouble paying sometimes she has helped you?

Yeah.

But you're not sure that she can keep doing that?

Yeah, sometimes she give it to me. Sometimes one come in here. Even him, one time I had the apron with that pocket and I see in my apron, you know was \$100.

And she put it in?

Not her, him.

Oh, right.

And I say to [daughter's name deleted], did you use my apron? And I say I find \$100 in the pocket and she say [name deleted] must've put it in. His name is [name deleted].

Mmm, so how often do you see your daughter?

Ah, all depends you know, now because she doesn't work, short in the money you know.

Mmm, for the airfare?

She was for the Christmas, yeah and New Year.

So she came at Christmas?

And he was too, yeah, mmm.

So, does she usually come back at Christmas?

So far, nearly every Christmas, coming, yes, so far, mmm; sometimes in between, but when my husband was sick, when he have the stroke she was very often here.

Mmm.

She was probably nearly every month.

Dear that's a lot. And so she used to fly?

Mmm?

Did she fly or did she drive?

No, when he's in the hospital I ring up and eight o'clock in the evening and eight o'clock in the morning, she's in the hospital.

Yeah but did she come from Melbourne by plane? By plane?

By plane, mmm, yeah, by plane.

So do you have any other relatives in Australia?

Here? Not close. We have some but nearly all die. I have some relatives in, in Brisbane but far away you know, not close. Not many from Yugoslavia. All the old ones is dying

Mmm.

Because that is age like that you know.

Mmm, and so what about nephews and nieces here? Did your?

Nobody.

Oh.

Yeah, even friends very little.

Oh.

Yeah in Tasmania probably old ones, about five.

Mmm, but you go, you go out to things?

Not with them.

Oh right.

I go out more with Australian people.

Oh right, mmm.

Because some of them doesn't know to speak English and doesn't want to mix up.

Oh right.

He say, you know ...

Mmm.

What he say, you make me stay in my house and my ... I couldn't [inaudible] care less what I say. I get by what I know.

So you've done well to learn English.

I did one year to [name deleted] Matric when I come in.

Oh.

And after I'd been pregnant and I have a baby and finish.

Uh, huh

What I learn in that year in between. [Laughs.]

Oh, but you would have learned quite a lot working wouldn't you?

Yeah but really I by myself in work you know. Two women in the one floor you flying.

Oh too busy.

You have no time to talk.

No time to talk.

No time to talk.

Oh.

Only talk lunchtime. Morning tea's 15 minutes [inaudible].

Mmm, yeah.

But I buy a lot of books you know and newspaper and I reading.

Mmm, and your daughter did she speak English at home?

Four language she speak.

Oh.

German, French, Australian, Yugoslav.

Oh.

And now she speak little bit Japanese and Italian.

Oh.

Yeah.

Yes so she must be very clever.

She like, to learn. She go to the university nearly all the time.

[Laughs.]

She wanted something, you know, and she got a semester for three months, six months whatever you know come in and she going [pause] there.

And so what about your neighbours? You must know a lot of your neighbours around here?

Not many there. Good neighbour, some is gone, and some Australian doesn't like it us, no. Three of them is Australian.

Mmm.

Even you know them is not very friendly one to other.

Oh.

You know you can see, but when I see like that before I have very good neighbour next door, was Salvation Army, for 12 years was there. I have the picture of them and [pause] when I be in the Melbourne to see my daughter one of that neighbour she here, are you coming to see my daughter?

Mmm.

And she ring up, in my daughter place because her friend know my daughter telephone number.

Mmm.

And she ring up and I say whose speaking, Mrs [name deleted]. I say which Mrs [name deleted] because I forgot your name because I know too many. She say, are you Sofie?

Mmm, mmm.

I say yes. I say how you know me? Say, I been your neighbour.

Mmm

And after she say how long you stay here and I say another two weeks. She say, I must come in to see you. She live far away from Melbourne, Melbourne you know but you know, mmm [pause]...

Further out. Yeah

Yeah but she come in to see me and bring me basket of flowers, box of chocolate and kissing and talking and. I didn't see the children because everyone was in the holiday; but anyway she send me the letter after and picture of the children.

Mmm.

Yeah, and after, before that was one but very short because he was sick, he had the cancer. And his wife, he want to die in England. He was English.

Mmm.

But after that you know too many changing there. Yeah, here; she's Polish. She's very quiet. She don't want, you know, to have too many, you know bit nobody. Before was lady Italian, but she move to Sandy Bay. She was ok and very friendly and we visit to one another but lately no, no.

No visiting lately.

No, some, hullo, hullo; good morning; how are you; lovely day? Some that are [inaudible], yeah.

And I suppose if you needed help you could probably ask them? You think?

No, no.

You don't think so.

No.

Like if you needed milk from the shop or something like that.

Oh always I put in the fridge some extra. No, no. I don't want that. No.

What do you freeze it?

Yeah, uh huh. I freeze it and I take it out, all when I need it.

So how do you do your shopping?

I got aged care.

Oh right. So you've got someone who comes and ...

Yeah, two times in the week.

And do they go and shop with you?

Yeah, yeah. Uh huh, she go and help me about the cleaning.

Ah.

And do the shopping and pay the bills and everything.

So she has two visits, one to clean and one to shop and pay the bills?

Only it depends. Sometimes we do only cleaning.

Yeah.

Sometimes we do about shopping because if I have some bill, not finished in there, doesn't matter anyway. Two times in the week I have, mmm.

So is that, for how long each time?

Two hours, one day.

So you get the same person who comes all the time?

This one is second year. I have one before for five years but she retire because her husband was sick. And she take some other job because that job was not good for him. And now two three years, one year, and that's it.

Mmm, yeah and so is that nice? Do you get on well with her?

We did finish ok some before and some is little bit you know [pause]. He want it in her way you know.

Mmm.

You can't say to her clean the stove you know this way. That isn't my way. I say ah well, this needed to be washed. She say I never washered my oven. I don't want to wash somebody else.

[Laughs.] Mmm.

Oh yeah, she wanted money but she don't wanted to do the job.

Well not the way you wanted it done.

No.

Yeah, so how did you feel about that?

What you can say? I leave that to her conscience.

Oh, mmm, yeah.

She should know better. When you're going to work cleaning is cleaning.

Mmm, but you didn't get it done the way you wanted it to be done?

No, no.

Mmm.

No she, you can't make it her to doing that.

So this is the one who's coming now?

Now this one is better.

Oh.

She's not, very clean but she's probably sick of job. She got four children and husband working, she working. And she got it about ten of us and I think she's sick of herself [laughs]. But she's nice personality, you know. She's not nasty. She know, you know some time she never done properly and I say to her I said [name deleted] look chair is very dirty. Oh thanks, what if my husband see that, could kill me. [Laughs.]

[Laughs]

But is nice personality. She's not rude you know.

Mmm, mmm, and so what is it you don't like about living here?

Uh?

What don't you like about living here?

In this house?

Yes.

I like it.

Oh you do like it?

Yeah. I like it. I make it the house in my way.

It's very homely in here.

Yeah, I make it plan for the house.

Mmm. You make it?

I make it the plan [pause].

Yeah.

About the house.

And so what do you have? So this is a downstairs flat.

Yeah. I have two bedroom. One bedroom ok and one small one. I have sitting room and kitchen, bathroom, laundry, toilet.

And it's all level access [pause] out the front?

Yeah.

Mmm, and how big is the house upstairs?

One more bedroom than here.

So it's a three-bedroom house.

Because here we have the garage.

Oh.

And that is one extra room in the top.

So it's the same layout but just one more bedroom?

Yeah, one more bedroom, uh huh.

Mmm, and do you find, do you ever walk out to the shops. I suppose you don't anymore because, you've got arthr ... What have you got?

Arthritis, four times hip replacement.

Four times?

No I can't go even 100 metres, yeah.

So the steepness of the hill wouldn't be any issue to you at all.

No way, no way. I got a discount you know. I got it book from Transport Department.

Mmm.

And I got from aged care you know to go into the doctor and the Red Cross, bit of everything, help.

So what does that entitle you to?

Uh?

What can you get for that, the book? Is that taxi vouchers?

Yeah,

Mmm, so what?

Fifty percent.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Mmm, so how many of those do you get per week?

It all depends on.

Oh.

I can use if I want it, ten, if I need it.

Yeah but you pay for it.

Oh yeah! Of course is not for nothing.

Mmm.

But if something was ten dollars, I pay five dollars.

Yeah, mmm, yeah, it's a big difference.

Twenty dollars if I go to Macquarie Street for some x-ray, costs me \$11, \$12 one-way.

Mmm.

But that I didn't pay full.

Mmm, yeah.

Thanks god.

Mmm.

Mmm.

So do you still need to get x-rays of your hip?

Last week I did.

Mmm.

Been playing up little bit you know [pause].

Mmm.

But I can't have anymore operation because I'm too old and I can't have anaesthetic anymore.

How old are you?

[Pause.] *Seventy-eight.*

And have they told you you're too old.

They've what?

Have they've told you you're too old?

Yeah, he say after sixty-five he can't do that.

After sixty-five?

Yeah. Stop for the operation.

So when did you have your last hip replacement?

Eight years ago.

Eight years ago.

Yeah.

So when you were seventy?

Yeah.

Mmm.

But that is spinal trouble now. Spinal in the back, cartilage is worn out.

Oh yeah, mmm.

And hurting; that's cos I have no balance and I can't walk properly.

Mmm. [Pause.] So do you have a garden here at all?

After my husband die no more garden. I have lawn in that's all. [Laughs.]

And does someone come and mow that?

Yeah, yeah, mmm.

And do you get help with the cost of that? Or? Do you pay for that yourself or do you get some help with the cost of that?

Very little, very little. Aged Care pay.

Oh that's good.

Yeah.

That's good.

I think \$2.50 or \$3 there all and all the rest pay them; \$5, something.

So you pay a bit towards it?

But I never pay them. I pay in the office monthly,

Oh.

Company house, yeah.

Yeah so sounds like you've got all the services you need.

Yeah, yeah, uh huh.

Yeah so is there any way you think your housing could be improved?

Aged Care he come for to give more hours, special about the garden because I need it more because it is big garden and I got two hours gardening in the fortnight.

To ah ...

Like you take that much salt in the sea, you know.

Yeah.

You can't see he's done in two hours in the fortnight. I need it more help about the garden. About the house or [inaudible] I can manage now so far but about the garden, kill me.

So how long is it that you've had trouble getting around?

Just when my husband had the stroke, last one about five years ago. Yeah. But special when it's cold weather like that it is stiff.

Mmm.

And sore from one arm to other. You can't come in the morning you know by the time you know you warm it up.

Huhhh, your shoulders. So are you planning to move? Do you think of moving? Selling the house?

I was thinking you know to sell but price very little and I see the places, rubbish.

Mmm.

I say better I stay here because I got it level and doesn't cost me very much for going to the doctor or Purity. If I want sometimes to go to Purity with a taxi, costs me two dollars fifty.

Mmm.

And \$2.50 or \$3 to coming back but then other places, if I go too far away cost me \$30 like that.

Mmm.

That's why I'm right here.

So you've, you've looked at what you might be able to buy after you sell this house and what it's too far out and not very nice or ...

I would like to have the small place, level, no steps.

Mmm.

But like villa unit you know to be myself but that, unit be close together.

You don't like the way there, there what they're too close to other people or

You have nooo [pause] privacy.

Mmm.

I was looking in at [name of suburb deleted]. Agent he take me. He show me barbecue area, what two metres, not room to put two, three chairs.

[Laughs.]

Barbecue area in that one from there only fence, you know.

So you have looked at them. You've actually gone and had a look.

Yes I did. I did. I try everything.

Oh, so what area were you looking in?

Here, closer, mmm.

And how did the prices of those places compare with what you could get for this house?

Not much to what you buy how much I can sell. One were from [name of suburb deleted] I think were in Roberts, something like that. He gave it to me very little price and he show me to buy something rubbish.

Oh.

Which one, kitchen three metres long by two and a half, while little fridge, floored horrible, bathroom old one. You have to put in another \$50,000 just to repair bathroom and kitchen.

Mmm.

I say I better keep it my old rubbish than to clean up somebody else.

[Laughs.]

I try until I can like that, and that's it.

So do you think about a retirement village at all?

Maybe one day.

Mmm.

Only depends see my movement you know and my health.

Mmm.

Yeah.

So, I mean there's different things ... I mean you can have a little unit can't you with a group of other people where you can pay to go.

Yeah I don't mind to buy yeah. Of course you can't get for nothing.

There's Derwent Waters Estate isn't there. It's a place like that. Or, or there's nursing homes aren't there or there's hostels where you get some services to the room or there's nursing home where you get all the sort of care.

You know one is coming time I leave it to see, you know, because all the time is different you know. Different rule, different buildings you know, different everything.

Yes, mmm.

And leave it when I come it time I have to move.

If you need to know about it you'll find out about it.

Yeah, yeah. I don't want now to see.

Yeah.

Because every year is different.

Mmm, yes so does anyone one at Aged Care talk to you about things.

Mmm?

Do people at Aged Care talked to you about ...

Good people. Yes I was talking and I say to them when I was in [name of nursing home deleted].

Mmm.

I was thinking to buy a unit in there. Cost \$120,000 and if I die that is not my house.

Mmm.

That is still belong to them. Every year \$5,000 go from your value.

Mmm.

Two thousand lost at when you put deposit.

Mmm.

You pay for the gardening.

Mmm.

You pay that; you pay that.

Mmm.

Nothing left for you.

Mmm.

[Pause.] *Very expensive, very, and it's not yours. He give it to you how much he put the price and that is him building.*

Mmm.

Which is not fair!

Mmm, and what would you get for this house? Do you know?

Ah in that time when my husband die I think was \$130,000.

Mmm, so when your husband died you thought about selling.

Yeah.

Selling at that time.

I was frightened to stay by myself you know but slow I settle down. I see five year, three year, no better than here.

Mmm.

Better sit down here.

Mmm.

Still I get up when I want it. I eat when I want it. And what I want it, you know.

Mmm.

[Pause.] *I go out. Ah I go out with Veteran Affair every Tuesday, tomorrow.*

Mmm.

We have the lunch and play cards or something. Then Friday I go with Senior.

Mmm.

Once in the month I go with the District Nursing. We have the lunch behind the [name of nursing home deleted]. And here we are.

You're quite busy. [Laughs.]

Better to stay here myself, especially in the evening later.

Yeah.

You get mad.

So, in the evening [pause] you'd get mad if you were somewhere else or?

No you get mad because you by yourself.

Yeah.

Through the day by self, through the night by self; like that when you going an hour through the day you coming in the evening, have a bath, have that busy, going to bed you tired. That's because you know it's good to go a little bit out and mix with the people.

Yes, yes, yes so I think what you've been saying to me is ...

Uh?

Even though it's lonely living on your own here and it might be less lonely at [name of nursing home deleted], because when you go out you're not that lonely.

That's cos, make me feel better. One year I didn't go nowhere.

Mmm.

And when I go first time out I was jealous when people laughing.

Huh.

I say how are these people laughing. I can't laugh. One year after my husband die I never laugh.

Oh.

I never have television on.

So after he died you didn't go out for one year?

No.

Yeah, I've had other people say that.

No, no.

Because it's a big adjustment isn't it?

I didn't expect him to die so quick. He had that heart operation about 15 years ago but was not that much bad.

Mmm.

But after that he had the stroke in 17th of January and he died in 20 of May.

Oh.

And thanks god because he die. You believe me because I don't like him to see him suffer, he was paralysed you know one side.

And did he come home before that?

How he can come in home? He can't walk. He wanted to coming home and I would like and I was thinking, I talk to nurses to bring him through the day you know, because I was living upstairs but I was thinking to warm it up here, to make comfortable for him to bring him here.

Oh right.

But no you can't, you need three people to be with you.

Yeah.

Yeah, so with me, just impossible.

And so you hadn't lived on your own before?

No.

And so how, but now you have lived on your own what do you think about it?

I don't want to think.

Huh.

Just I leave it to, the future.

How do you feel about it and how do you find living on your own?

It's not easy. Not easy about the money, not easy about the work.

Mmm, so did your husband used to manage the money before?

Yeah, but two pension is different than one pension.

Oh right yeah.

Yeah, difference. I pay the bill electricity like I pay for two.

Yeah because you still heat the same space.

Heat the same, yeah.

Yeah.

It's not the same with one pension to cover the same what cover two pension.

Mmm, so that's the hardest thing about being on your own, the money?

Mo-oney, and work. You not healthy to do the work, to pay you can't that what you have from government is very, very little.

So what about the people who've been coming and bothering you? You said you've had problems with people.

I ignore. I report to police before and police you can see he can't do anything.

So what happens?

They come in the step and say a lot of things, bad things in the door, break the door, and...

So how often does that happen?

Ah, to the step through the night, nearly every night.

Oh.

Every night, yeah.

Do you think there's someone, on purpose, who's doing it?

Of course, of course in the purpose. He knows not law, nobody who can do anything for them and just he do it.

And do you have any idea who it is?

Yeah, police know.

It's not the person who used to live here?

Oh not him now, no, no, no. No, next door, neighbour.

Someone next door?

Yeah.

So he knows you?

Somebody who come in, in that place, for money; he wanted one who is mental sick boy. He pay the rent in three places, in number nine, number eight, in number twelve and all night he dancing. He never sleep two hours. He never working. Father millionaire. He just do what he wanted.

Oh.

He have the syphilis you know and a schizophrenic.

Oh dear, so he's a bit; he's not all there really.

Mmm?

He's not all there?

He's been in Launceston in a special hospital.

Oh dear.

Yeah, and policeman when I say to him catch him and put him in the... He say we not allowed, we can catch him but we not allowed to put him in the gaol. We can put him in that special hospital for people like that and hospital, he want to get rid of him. He give it to him injection to be right for two or three days then let him in the street

Mmm.

Which is not fair.

Mmm.

He needed to be working. Like everyone to working, doing like him stupid things to disturb the people. Better government took us help and give it to them little help.

But he's got plenty of money.

Oh yeah, ah, Toyota company that was to belong to him family.

Mmm.

Yeah, everyone for money do everything. That's stupid people. I, I never against nobody's religion but really these people know what he done and he think you know he do something good.

So do you find people treat you differently now that you're older?

He think we are stupid, European people you know, we don't know nothing.

[Laughs.]

Just what I think when he say something like that, wog, wog, wog, wog. I say all right, probably you are wog too.

[Laughs.]

And people think European people you know is behind people but we have intelligent people and good worker, hard worker, very hard worker. My husband was very hard worker.

Yes a lot of people who came to this country worked very hard didn't they, to survive here and build a home here and raise a family?

My husband when he was working at Gordon and I never see him for five weeks. Nobody want to working and he have to do the job for him, yeah.

And how old was your daughter then?

Sometimes he's come in Sunday morning and Sunday nights he going back, he come in only for the one day, bring me the clothes to wash it you know and he going then, somebody take the clothes when he's going the next day. You have more to ...

I think that's about it. I think we've done very well.

[Turns tape off.]

Interviewee 21

How long have you lived here?

I've ... just over ten years [inaudible].

And can you tell me about where you lived before you moved here?

Still in [name deleted], just up by the [name deleted] School there. I, I migrated out here in '51 and I, we settled in [name of town deleted].

So you're English?

Yes and, then I came to work in [name deleted]; met my husband there and we moved up to, [name deleted] Drive and, we stayed there until my husband passed away and then I had this built.

Oh.

Just for myself

Oh so that's what led to you moving here?

Yes.

Because your husband died?

Yeah, mmm.

So did you do that fairly early after he died or did you give it a bit of time first?

I wanted to leave pretty early, it was a very old weatherboard house that had been added on and added on as the children came along and he, I had no backyard. He had two and a half big sheds in there.

Heh.

Where he worked, he was a mechanic and so it was, it wasn't suitable for me although he left it to the children and I could stay there as long as I wanted.

Yes.

It wasn't a good policy.

Yes.

Uh so the children were uh able to, through solicitors, were able to, change the will and let them sell the house, and every cent of the money had to be put into this one.

Oh. That is fantastic!

Mmm.

So then yeah ...

It made it ... it worked out very well, yes.

I didn't know that was possible.

Yes it all depends. It was a fairly straightforward Will; there was no complications, but I had a good solicitor in [name of town deleted], and who are friends of ours, and they pushed for the, Will to be uh changed if ... It worked you know if I spent all the money and on the house only.

Mmm.

It wasn't to go to me, or the children.

Mmm, yes so it's an excellent ... because it was for your life.

Yes! That's right. Yes.

Yeah, it's an excellent house.

Yes.

And is it two or three bedroom?

Two bedrooms.

Mmm, yeah so you just built something to suit yourself?

Yes.

Mmm.

That's right.

And you chose the design?

My daughter helped me, she's very, when I see, a plan of a house on a piece of paper it doesn't mean a thing to me ...

Mmm.

But my daughter, she's very hand-crafty. She can see these things and she could picture it and she, altered the design we chose. She altered it a tiny bit, to suit me and she helped me do the colour scheme and get everything in.

Mmm, yeah, oh well it seems like ... yeah I mean it's all quite level access too isn't it?

Yes it is. Yes I sort of said that because I wanted; this house has got to last me. I mean this is the point.

Mmm.

And it's very difficult to get builders to understand, especially the one that I happened to have, that you need things, to think about the future because it's got to last me.

Mmm.

And I mean I am going to get ... I've got arthritis so I know I'm going to be crippled with arthritis so you don't need steps but he would insist on putting steps and an awkward piece of wood that I have to step over for the back door.

Mmm.

Which I had, I asked him to drop all the switches and the handles a bit lower because it is difficult when you're, when you're older

Yeah.

To get up, to reach up to those.

I've interviewed a few people now and ...

Yes

I've interviewed a lot of people with arthritis

Yes, yes.

In their shoulders.

Yes, and he couldn't understand why.

Mmm.

You know we, I had to ...

[Laughs.]

Battle with him to do it. [Laughs.] But ...

So that's very interesting.

Yeah.

So there's not a lot of knowledge perhaps among the building industry ...

No, no, no.

What makes a good house for someone who's getting older?

Among some of them, yes.

Mmm, and so did you give any thought to the bathroom too? Like some people ...

Yes I've got a walk in shower.

Mmm.

I said I don't want those stupid little tiny things with the, you know, just the ...

With the glass ...

With the, glass and the doors all round and having to step in and all that sort of thing, so I've got just a walk-in. It's the full width of the bathroom. The full length and the width of the bathroom and uh, it's just perfectly flat.

And so is that with your daughter? Your daughter helped you do that?

Yes, yes. I decided. I said, I want that and again we had a battle with the builder to do it. [Laughs.]

Heh, instead of his own way!

He's put a window, he's put a window right there by my shower. [Laughs.]

Oh dear.

[Laughs.] *I mean it's, it's got thick, coloured sort of glass you know but yes it's, it', it's a silly place to, to put a window.*

Yeah.

[Laughs.] *I put up with that.* [Laughs.]

Yeah and what about the width of the doorway, did you do anything about that?

No they are ordinary doorways, yes.

Because that's, you know something people do, is make them wider.

Yes.

In case they've need of a wheelchair.

If I'd 've got enough money; I had no other money except what we sold the house for and being a weatherboard, there's those sheds on there, it was, it wasn't easy to sell it.

Mmm.

And at that particular time you know the money was a bit tight and houses weren't selling very high.

Yes. It's better now.

So I only had, I only had enough money to do the house. I had to be careful. We did all the painting ourselves. Well we got a professional to do the ceiling, but we did all the rest.

And, so the, you couldn't have afforded a three-bedroom then?

No, no, no.

So you just got what you could afford?

Yes, yeah.

So what size is it, in squares?

Uh I'd say it's probably around about nine something.

So it's not a big house.

It's like a large unit or a very small house.

Mmm.

Which ever you like to call it.

Yeah.

But uh ...

And are you happy to live here?

Yes, yes very nice.

Mmm, so it does, the size suits you?

Yes, yes.

And it's ok to heat?

Yes, probably. It's not too bad I probably need to upgrade it to something a little bit better.

This is a heat-bank, is it?

Yes, yes.

And what, so you'd need to use another heater sometimes when it gets very cold.

Yes especially, I've only got one in my own bedroom. The other bedroom is a sewing room and I do handcrafts and sewing [sigh] and things like that so I have to take that, affordable one up here, because it doesn't heat up, right up into the other rooms.

Yeah and how do you find the cost of the heating?

It's, it's, it's all right. I meant it's, it's going up all the time and you can't really do much about it but maybe I, you know, I'll have to perhaps think about a heat-pump or something like that; some, some different kind of heating probably.

Mmm, yeah. They're expensive aren't they? I'm thinking of one of those myself but [laughs] I just haven't made the plunge yet because of the cost.

Yes, yes, that's right, yes.

Because even a small one costs around \$3,000.

Oh they do, yes, yes.

About the smallest one, mmm. And so you feel safe here?

Yes. I, I've got a troublesome neighbour, but apart from that, only just one neighbour on the other side. All the other neighbours are very quiet, very nice. Yes.

So what's the problem with the neighbour on that side?

He's dealing in drugs.

Oh dear!

And uh all that sort of thing and he has girls there and late nights and cars banging and squealing; and [sighs] uh ...

Mmm.

There's been one police raid there already

Mmm.

And the police have been there twice last week and ...

Mmm, so do you feel a bit ... How do you feel then living so close to someone like that?

I've got to be careful with the actual owner. I've got no problems with him,

Ah.

But when he's sober; when he's all right he wouldn't do any harm to me but it's the other fellas who come. I wouldn't like to go out there or ... I'm too frightened to ...

Mmm.

Dob him in.

For fear of?

I couldn't report him because I'm a bit nervous of the repercussions from the other people, not the owner.

Right, mmm. So how long has he been there?

Well he owns the house. Uh, he's been coming and going. I think he spent a stretch in, in prison because he disappeared last year and we thought oh good. You know, he rented it out to people because

there was a nice lady with a granddaughter. She was looking after her daughter's eldest. And very quiet, very nice. And then he came back and kicked her out set up him [inaudible] and he's come back and it's started all over again.

Yeah, there's not much you can do about that because you can't change someone's lifestyle

No, no.

Or their friends.

No, mmm.

Some problems you might be able to negotiate about but ...

Mmm. [Laughs.]

So that's one of the things you don't like about living here then?

Yes, yes.

And are there any other things you don't like about living here?

No, everybody else is fine. It's not too far away from the, from the shops and things.

So how do you get to the shops?

Uh I've got, I'm quite mobile; I've got a car at the moment, and it's not too far to walk if you ... We've got the footpath now so that makes it nice and easy.

Mmm, what is it? It seems a fair drive, so how long would it take to walk it?

Only just over about ten minutes, less than quarter of an hour, yes.

Oh yeah that's not so bad, yeah, yeah. I mean because some people just make the decision to give up driving or sometimes for some reason they have to.

Oh yes there'll probably be a time later on but at the moment I'm quite active I'm involved in doing a lot of community work and I'm using the car every day so at the moment, so mmm ...

I saw the Meals-on-wheels sticker on your car.

Yes. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Yeah, so you do Meals-on-Wheels?

Yes.

I thought it was interesting, once in the paper they had something on Meals-on-wheels and I think one of the people featured was a woman who was like in her late eighties who was ...

[laughing]

Yes, delivering meals yes, [laughs].

Probably to some old crocks in their fifties. *[Laughing.]*

Yes. [Laughing.] Yes, yes. Yes we do find that. There are quite a few of the older people who are delivering meals.

So it's a matter of health really.

Yes, yes. Keep yourself active and don't dwell on what's in store for you later on. I mean we just, you know, you don't think of those things.

It may never happen.

That's right, yes.

Yeah, you can't know what's going to happen.

No, no, that's right. And there's no good dwelling on something that you don't know about. It's silly.

Mmm, so you just get on with your life then?

Yes.

Yeah we've covered a lot of things already, because we've talked about your neighbours; and so the other people around here I mean you feel you could, I mean you could call on them for help if you needed to?

Yes, yes.

Is there any time that you've needed to do that?

Uh no, not really, no; I haven't had to call on them at all no, but I've got all very good neighbours, all round, yes.

And so what is a good neighbour?

Oh, one who speaks to you, and even just passing the time of day. I, I don't stand and talk to them all that much. There's a couple that I'm a little bit closer with because they've been here a lot longer. But you know, somebody who'll, I know that ... I could go straight across to those people over there and they would help me.

Mmm.

We're not in each other's houses or anything

Mmm.

But I know that they would help and I would help them if they were in, I mean in need of something or other.

Mmm, so most people tend to see a good neighbour as someone like that, someone who'll talk to you?

Yes.

And help if you need it.

Yes, yes.

But, yeah not in each other's houses.

That's right. Yes. I mean if you pick a friend and make a friend of a neighbour, if they are on your same likes enough but at the moment I'm pretty busy. At the moment I don't have time to sit down and have a cup of tea with anybody [laughs] and have a good old chinwag.

Mmm.

But that's not my scene anyway.

Mmm.

Unless it was a really close friend. I made a really close friend of, that wouldn't eventuate and as we, the friendship grew but just as neighbours, just to know that you're friendly with each other uh, and you've got that feeling that if you were in strife you could go across to each other and help each other.

And so are they aware of the situation next door?

Oh yes, we all are, yes.

Mmm.

Yes. It's very difficult.

Mmm, so has anyone called the police?

I'm not real sure. I don't ask so that I can honestly say, I don't know anything. I think they have but they've all got husbands and families, so that they'd be a little bit more, feel a little bit more secure, but yes it's not a very nice situation.

Mmm, so there are young children living around here too?

Yes. We've got ... there's young children over there and down the road and along here, mmm.

So you've been living in [name of town deleted] all of your married life.

Yes, yes.

And your children grew up here.

Yes, yes.

You must know a lot of people here.

Oh yes, I know just about all the, every other person probably in [name of town deleted], yes.

Because someone was saying last time I was down here that a lot of new people are moving in.

Oh yes.

It isn't like it was.

It's becoming a commuter town now. All the old families have gone. Well the older grandparents are still here but all the younger ones've, are commuting to [name of suburb deleted] or town and it's just one big stream of traffic there now.

Mmm.

Uh, one from the other, all the ways backwards and forwards each day.

Mmm, so are you saying some of the people who are commuting actually grew up here too but there are some that have moved in aren't there?

Oh most of them have moved in yes, mmm.

So what about the children of the older families here? What's happened to them?

I think they, they would move away either to the mainland or to town yes.

Yes, it's pretty common and I joke about meeting people in the supermarket and we both talk about our kids who are on the mainland. [Laughs.]

Yes, yes, yes.

Yes, it's been a real pattern in Tasmania but perhaps it will change because the situation has been improving.

Yes, yes.

So I think my daughter would like to come back. In fact she's been talking about living around here.

Oh lovely.

Because she'd like me to be near.

Oh yes that's the usual thing for ... You need to have grandparents close by sort of thing. And you get to see them. You get to ... I mean you know you grow up with them. I mean I've got several. I've got four ... I've got seven grand children on the mainland and I hardly see them because, I can only go over about once every two or three years and it's so expensive and because they're scattered so, everywhere I've got to take at least seven weeks off in order to give them a bit of quality time in each family if it, it's difficult.

And so does it worry you leaving the house?

No, no. I'm not scared at all.

You're not scared of anything happening to the house while you're on the mainland for seven weeks?

No, no. Oh I tell my neighbours. I tell the police, and they keep an eye out for me and my daughter comes every now and again, she'll come. And I arrange for one of my neighbours to collect the mail for me each day. And they'll come at odd times just to keep an eye on the place and make sure everything's fine but I've had no problems.

So you do have some grand children here?

Yes I've got four.

So you've got eleven all together.

Yeah.

Huh, and what are their ages?

Ooh, from 18 right the way down to two and a bit.

So what ages are the ones here?

Ah, 13, ten, eight and two and a bit.

[Conversation deleted.]

Oh so from the four they've had eleven children.

Yes, yes.

So it's still more than most people have these days and it's even unusual for everyone to have children these days.

Yes, yes, four runs in the family apparently because my brother's had four. I've had four.

[Name deleted]'s had four. [Name deleted]'s had four and [name deleted]'s had three. My other daughter hasn't ...

Oh you have one that hasn't had them.

Yes.

I don't think I've quite got my head around that.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] But I've got it on the tape so I can think about it later.

[Laughs.]

And are there any ways you think your housing here could be improved?

Oh I don't think so.

So there's nothing when you think about it, you don't sort of feel, oh if I had the money I'd do this or I'd do that?

Oh I need. I haven't got a carport, and I haven't, I can't do gardening, my back doesn't allow me to but I don't like gardening. That's not my forte.

Mmm.

I would like to, I have to pay a young chap to come and mow the lawns and I would like the extra money to have a nice garden. I love flowers and I love to see nice gardens but at the moment it's not doing very well; but, no I haven't got the money for a carport at the moment, it really is essential when you've got a car.

Yes I don't have one either. Yeah, it's not good for your car is it?

No.

It deteriorates. Yeah, and so what age is your car?

It's a '94.

Mmm, what sort of car?

It's a Nissan Bluebird station wagon.

Mmm.

I, I need the station wagon for the, to do the meals with.

And so do you think it's going to need replacing?

Ah, I haven't got the money to replace it. If I, if I replaced it, it would have to be whatever I could get for it, would have to be a smaller car with the same amount of money as whatever I got for it, but getting it done bit by bit. I, I can't afford to take it to the garage. I've got a young mechanic who's keen on fixing cars and he, he does little jobs for me as I can afford it; to keep it going.

So how did you get onto him?

The, the boy that does the, does my lawns, he, he uses him to do his truck and his car, so he passed him onto me.

So he's a local?

Yes, yes, mmm.

That's one of the good things about a place like this where; it's just the one community.

Yes.

And people know each other.

Yes that's right.

And you trust what they tell you.

And you pass these, these things onto each other. Yes, for sure.

Yes because I've spoken to some people who rely on their sons to help to keep their car going and service their car.

Yes well if I had my sons ... you see, both my sons are over on the mainland and both my daughters are here. My son would work on it for sure if he was here but unfortunately I can't do that.

Mmm, yeah so if anything happened to your car they'd be short of someone for the Meals-on-Wheels?

Yes.

Mmm.

Yes.

So how many people get Meals-on-Wheels? Do you just do this area?

Ah, I do the whole of the [name of area deleted][she co-ordinates the volunteers for the whole area].

Mmm.

But, but we're fairly light on at the moment. We've only got eleven [volunteers]. A lot of people think it's charity although they do pay for it. It's not much but they do pay for it, but I'm really not, really why [sure] they're not getting the meals, more people. There must be a lot of people that are isolated that need the meals for sure.

And who don't look after their nutrition perhaps because the cooking is not so easy, that sort of thing.

Yes, if they don't, especially the older people in, in that generation; the husbands never did anything. They did all the work, the wife stayed at home, did the cooking and when the male loses his partner, he's completely helpless.

Mmm.

And he doesn't know how to boil water.

Mmm.

And we've found, that's one of the main reasons why we try to encourage them to have the meals, because they, they just don't know how to look after themselves.

Mmm, so a lot of them are men then, a lot of the people?

Yes. Yeah.

I suppose with health problems of all kinds as well [inaudible].

That's right yes.

So some in quite outlying areas too?

Oh yes. I go right out to [name of town deleted]; I've got one gentleman out there and that's a, a 30k round trip just for one person.

And you get mileage for that?

We get ten dollars.

Where ever you go?

Yeah.

So it'd cost you more than ten dollars to do?

Yes, mmm.

Yeah, so can you explain a bit more about that? About what you get? So every time you do it you get ten dollars to use your car?

Yes, yeah.

Whether you go just in town or whether you go a long way out?

Well it's never just in town. It's always a long way out. We did have three runs. I do the [name of town deleted] run because nobody else 'll do it. I go down to the hospital, down to the [name of nursing home deleted] I should say now. And we get the meals hot.

Down at [name of town deleted]?

Yes down at [name of town deleted]. We get the meals hot every day. I bring, bring them back to [name of town deleted] at the Bowling Club car park and I have drivers waiting for me there. We used to have two, two runs. One would do one or two in the [name of town deleted] area and then go out towards [name of town deleted]. The others would do a certain amount of [name of town deleted] and go out [name of town deleted], [name of town deleted] way; and [name of town deleted], do that area, out that way.

So you run it?

Yes I'm the co-coordinator, mmm.

So you must know quite a lot about some housing circumstances of people who live in more isolated areas.

Oh yes. It opens your eyes. Oh my goodness, some of them are dreadful, but really pathetic. And some of them, we're the only people they see, all day. Uh, they never see anybody else.

So how often; you do it every day do you?

I'm, I'm the co-coordinator. I go down to [name of town deleted] and get the meals and we can't afford to go out to this gentleman every day at [name of town deleted]. I have to do it twice a week now but and he's got fridge and freezer and everything.

Oh.

And we, we give him the extra meals. He microwaves them.

Mmm, so every day you go to [name of town deleted], get the meals?

Yes, yes, mmm.

And distribute them, but every day you don't deliver meals.

No, no.

But you deliver to him, every second ... twice a week?

Yes, *twice a week.*

So it's the main run that you do?

Yes.

Now.

And if, if somebody doesn't turn up I have to do their run.

Mm, mmm.

But it's very interesting too ... some of the people you know that you meet and we try to give them a little bit of time, you know a few minutes but we can't stay too long because we've got the others to serve. But some of them are just eagerly sitting there at the table waiting; and you know, waiting for their meal. And every day, they're sitting in the same place; they'd be almost ... feels as if they've never moved out of that chair [laughs] from one day to the next sort of thing but it's, it's very sad to see some of them.

So do some of them talk to you about what their life's like?

A little bit. Not much but you can guess a lot of it. You know that either they haven't got any family or the family just don't bother with them. That's, that's one of the big troubles when they get to a certain age or a certain situation. They roll their tongue and they don't bother coming back to, you know, to help them or give them love or do anything for them.

It must be a bit painful for them to do it if they're too far away to help.

That's right, yes.

[Long pause.] So what else do you do besides Meals-on-Wheels?

Nothing much, the Country Women's Association. We do a lot of projects and a lot of community work. I belong to Abbeyfield House. Do you know much about Abbeyfield House?

Yes. Yes, I do, quite a lot.

We've just had our second birthday and they were celebrating; we've celebrated our second birthday and a full house, at long last. And we've actually got two on our waiting list. It was nine years of hard slogging.

Ah, so you've been on it all the way through?

Yes. I just about came in a month after it started, the first meeting they actually had with the committee. And yes it's been a hard battle to, to get it up and going but we finally achieved it.

So what do you think of that model?

Very, very good; it's, it's, it's that first step when you leave your home. You're not ill enough or in any way to go into a nursing home but there's, there's nothing else. You either ... See some of these that are in Meals-on-Wheels, like they keep saying to me it's good to keep, keep the people at home, but it isn't always that situation. It's not always appropriate.

Mmm.

And Abbeyfield House is that first step, to old age, if you like to call it that, before they have to go into a hostel or, or a nursing home of some sort.

In fact it may not even be necessary if they can stay somewhere like that.

No, no. Well we've proved ... There was three ladies that went into there and, and their health was down. They could hardly walk. They were depressed. They'd just, two of them had lost their husbands and and within weeks they were up and chirpy. They ... one couple, I was delivering meals up until he passed away but it was the company. And they can potter about and it feels like a home because it, that's what it is; a home. There's no bells. There's no doctors. There's no, there's a housekeeper that does the main housework and cooks the main meals for them. But they can potter in there and go and make themselves some scones, or you know if they cook, or make themselves a cake for afternoon tea or something. They can come and go whenever they want. The three of them... two of them now drive the cars. So they potter about and do their own thing still but they've got this nice home to come back to and they haven't got all the worry of the gardening and, and the rates and, and the looking after and all that sort of thing.

Mmm.

Which seems to you know, take that burden off their shoulders and they can relax and enjoy themselves.

It's a lot better than [name of nursing home deleted] isn't it?

Oh yes, it's a completely different concept and ...

Even for visitors at [name of nursing home deleted], you can only go at certain times.

Yes, that's right. Yes.

And also apparently it's very big.

Yes.

It's very hard to find your way around.

Oh gosh, it is, yes. But we have a guest room that if anybody lives up north and wants to come and visit one of the, the residents they've got a bed they can stay overnight or the weekend or whatever.

And does that get used much?

Yes, yes.

And, people get on with each other all right?

Yes, it's, it takes a little bit of doing. It's like a hotel you know, you're sort of coming and going. It's just one of those things, that they've just got to learn to be compatible with one another and, and accept each other.

Mmm.

So they're coming and going. They come all together for their midday meal and their tea and they can do what they like afterwards which they do and they've got their own room, which they furnish themselves.

So the company really gives them a second lease on life?

Oh yes, it does, oh yes, yes for sure.

Yes, I believe that. It's why I'm interested in those sorts of arrangements.

Yes, yes. It's very sad really to see some of these that we deliver meals to. They are rattling around in their big homes and, they're worrying about the garden. They've got to pay somebody to the garden, somebody to do all the housework, because they can't do it themselves and some of ... The list goes on and on and gets bigger and bigger and it just distresses them, to a point.

Yeah, and do they get any government help, the ones that you see, for the housework and the garden?

Yes, they do get home help but I mean it's only an hour every fortnight or something like that which is a bit ridiculous.

Yes it is.

And there is a sort of working bee that can ... goes and does the garden or chops the wood or whatever.

So who does that?

They [do], it's the same as Home Help. Home Help does the housework and the workman does outside work.

Mmm, and so do you talk to any of these people about Abbeyfield as an option.

Oh yes. Yes we've ... We have articles in the [name of area deleted] News and we've got brochures and ... which we

You give it out to people.

We give it out to people. Yes.

And so some people who come to the house have come from that source?

Yes. Yes.

And so do they sell their house?

Well it all depends on their circumstances. We're the only home that's actually ... I think we've got four now in Tasmania. And we're the only house that will accept both, either non-assistance or if they've got a property and they sell, and they may pay to come in. We've got both going.

But apparently all the ones at the moment, [name deleted] was saying, are all ones who didn't put any money in.

Oh yes. I think we've got two; yes, yeah.

And does that help with the budget for the house, to put that money in?

It, it ...

Because you've got to keep it in the bank don't you?

Yes, yes ...

Because they get most of it back.

Yes, yes ...

It must make the whole show more financially viable to have that.

Oh yes, it makes it more viable having the house full. When you've only got two, or three it was very difficult. We were almost in the red all the time and we had to sort of watch it and then we had to raise some money. We had to have a few raffles and things like this and ... to get some money in because you only get a certain amount. We only had one government grant and the ones that need assistance that come in the house and haven't got anything, they get subsidised but it was very difficult there for a while.

Do they all pay the same fee?

Oh yes, yes. You know they get nothing ... the ones that pay get no different service or treatment to the ones that do.

Because the housekeeper has to be paid.

Yes, yes, we've got the housekeeper. She's there all the week; well then we have to have two casual weekend housekeepers that come in of a weekend. Or when she has her holidays we got to have, to get extra housekeepers in so they've all got to be paid.

So it's more than just the housekeeper's salary?

Yes, mmm. That's right. And holiday pay and superannuation. That's right. Yes.

So do the people in the house, how much do they have left to do things?

It's ... I'm not sure about the exact amount at the moment but I think it's about three quarters of their pension.

So if the pension were, is it something like \$540 a fortnight, divided by four, so they'd have about a hundred dollars a fortnight? I suppose you could do some reasonable things with that.

Yes, oh yes. We're cheaper than Eldercare or any of the other big homes in Hobart.

Mmm, so if that's the case it's a wonder it was hard to fill.

Yes, we, we got a shock. When we, we had it, you know we were getting close to having it finished and we were saying oh gosh, you know we'd be starting to get people interested. They were too scared I think. They didn't understand or realise and know the concept

Mmm.

And we really had to sell it like anything.

Mmm, yeah, it's just not well known.

And then slowly it got really word of mouth around the place before people really got to understand what it was about.

Because of the way we live. I mean we live very isolated lives. Perhaps people are a little bit afraid of sharing a house with people they don't know.

Yes, yes, that's right. Yes that would all come into it I reckon.

Mmm, yes so being used to choosing what you do with your own place but they have that still in their own room.

Yes, that's right.

Because I've wondered if possibly another option might be each person have a unit a bit bigger than that with a kitchenette but still have the shared facilities. Whether there would be ways to adapt the model, but Abbeyfield ... I suppose it is a matter of cost because it all adds to the cost.

Yes, that's right.

If people don't have the capital.

An Abbeyfield House is run on a set concept and uh you change it.

It's all based on the cost in order that it works, yeah.

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, because I know. I think they are looking at adapting the model now. Apparently they're doing a different model in Canberra for people with mental illness, which is interesting.

Oh yes.

Because I was interested in doing that some years ago

Yes, yes.

And tried to get a project off the ground but really that went right off the rails and it didn't end up with one like that but now it's being done in Canberra.

Yes. I'm not saying that it's not needed. It's badly needed; those small units with, with their own little sort of little tiny unit.

They have a tea-making thing there don't they?

Oh they can make a cup of tea, ah and they've got one of those little tiny bar fridges.

Where they can keep a few things of their own.

Yes, they can keep their milk in there. They can't cook in there such as a meal but they can get themselves a piece of toast and a drink, oh yes.

And I think it's probably a good idea if someone is a bit frail and even a little bit forgetful and might leave a hot plate on, there's much more risk that there's going to be a fire.

Yes,

And in a house ...

Yes, yes, yes, mmm.

Of that many people you'd want to avoid that.

That's right and you get that way that way, we've seen it there, if a lady's not too well and she's staying in her room, all the others 'll pop in and say are you all right, do you want anything. And they like it, being waitresses, you know and wait on her hand and foot and help her.

So that's a real strength of the model.

Yes it is, yes so uh it's helping you know everybody in that sense.

It'd probably even be worth my while going and talking to the people there.

Yes.

Because at the end of this, what I'm aiming to do is ah ... and what you're saying is very informative you know in what I'm interested in.

Yes, yes.

But perhaps you know differently from a lot of the other interviews I've done. I'm very interested in coming up with some more options for people.

Yes, yes.

Because not everyone can stay in their home.

No, that's right. No, it does need those little units and maybe a communal dining and lounge room you know off, or close by or something like that. Where my brother was up in Inverell, I mean this was huge and it cost the earth, but their concept had everything right from the little units where my brother and his wife were staying in, they were dotted along there and then there was a foot path and a little bit of garden and over there was some administration and all that; and then if you were too ill to stay in, in your unit, you went over to a hostel that was more combined and, and, and you had nursing staff there; and then from there it was hospital and from there, it was dementia.

Yeah.

They had the whole concept all in, all in this one area.

But then do you think, do people really want to be living in their unit thinking oh well next I'll be in the hostel and then the nursing home? Is that a good way ...

It, it, it's, it's not a bit ... They don't seem to think about it.

Yeah.

No, it does seem to worry a lot of people.

But it does segregate people doesn't it.

Oh yes, oh yes, it probably would.

Whereas the Abbeyfield house, it's in, it's a house in [name of town deleted].

Yes, that's right.

It's a domestic scale house in [name of town deleted].

Yes, yes.

And people, they're in the community.

Yes, yes, mmm.

Whereas you get those big campuses of aged specific housing and I sort of think there must be better models than that.

Oh yes, mmm.

Than having a large institutional place.

Oh yes, mmm.

With housing as part of it but where people ... they lose their identity as householders.

Yes.

Compared to people in the mainstream community.

Yes, probably in the bigger cities or something like that it might be necessary perhaps or something like that.

Yeah.

But ...

Yeah, for safety, security and just you know for being able to get around safely with traffic and goodness knows what.

Yes, mmm, mmm.

[Conversation deleted.]

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 22

How long have you lived here?

Twenty-nine years in October; 29.

That's a long time, and can you tell me about where you used to live before you moved here?

I lived a mile out of [name of town deleted], up the [name deleted] Road. We lived on an orchard.

Mmm.

Yes we had farms up there, my husband and I.

Right, mmm, so have you lived in this area all of your life.

In the [name of area deleted] yes.

So you were born in this area?

No, I was born at [name of house deleted]; that is really in this area, I suppose, up the [name deleted] Road.

I don't know it.

No.

I don't know it. Is it a property or a town?

Oh well I was the only one born away from home but it was a midwife's home, [name deleted].

[Conversation deleted.]

And what led to your coming to live here, 29 years ago?

Twenty-nine years ago my husband could, was told not to work anymore so we had to sell the farms and so we came down here into [name of town deleted]. It's very convenient for the doctors and ...

Mmm.

And him walking around.

Mmm.

Yes.

So he needed to go to the doctor?

Oh yes. He ended up with rheumatoid and osteo-arthritis besides a bad heart.

Mmm, mmm.

And everything else.

And so what do you like about living here?

It's very convenient.

Mmm, it looks like it is very convenient.

Very convenient to the shops and the, my own doctor and of course I don't own a car now; gave my car away.

Mmm, so what do you do for transport?

My daughter comes and takes me to Hobart if I need to go, which I don't need to go very often. We can get most things down here.

Mmm, so how do you do your shopping from here?

From here? My daughter comes and takes me.

Oh.

Or either I walk up with a trolley and [inaudible] it.

So you've got a little shopping trolley?

Yes. I've got a shopping trolley; well it's not a little one either. It's a big one. [Laughs.] I can shop quite easy with that and it runs quite easy.

Mmm, and do you feel safe living here?

Yes, I have no worry. No. No worry at all. I, it's, I don't get frightened. I thought I would if I was left on my own but I'm, no, I've never been frightened.

So how long have you been in your own?

My husband died in 1984.

So you've been on your own nearly 20 years?

Yes, oh yes. I used to go to Queensland every winter but I haven't been since 1999.

Was that to stay with one of your children?

Yes, I have two children up there and I have a granddaughter and others that I used to stay with but I prefer to stay at home because this traveling can knock you out.

Mmm.

And going from one house to the other to visit them [laughs], it's [laughs] a bit much [laughs]. Oh well it's not very convenient for them either to have you all staying there.

Mmm.

So, poor [name deleted] I've only got my son there now and his daughter and son, but, they have their families.

Mmm, so has one of them come back down here?

Yes, she's up at [name of town deleted].

Mmm, that's a fair way away.

Yes but she comes pretty often.

Mmm.

[Laughing.] *It's that cold now she's migrated down to her daughter's, down at [name of town deleted].*

Oh I see, so she has grown up children.

Oh yes, oh yes. I've got 21 great grand children.

Great grand children too, goodness me.

Yes, well I'm not so young. [Laughs.]

Laughs, yeah, I haven't asked you your age yet.

I'm ... 82.

And what are your neighbours like? Do you know your neighbours?

They're all right. I don't ... I know them just to speak to them. No, I've had neighbours who were very friendly.

Where you lived before?

No here, here, yeah, I've had very nice neighbours. Well they're nice neighbours but they're very busy. Well this couple here, they're working and you don't see working people very often.

Do they work in town?

No,

Mmm, they work around here?

One's a, a boss up at [name of shop deleted]; he's quite all right.

Mmm.

I speak to him. He speaks to me.

Mmm.

But this is just a young couple here, with a little boy. Well he's not so young the husband and I don't know how old the wife is but I know he's sixty. [Laughs.]

And they've got a young, a child?

Yes, and he's only about three and a half.

Goodness me.

So his wife's not so old. [Laughing.]

No, she wouldn't be the same age as him would she. [Laughs.]

No way, no way. Oh they're quite nice but I don't see them very much. No.

Mmm.

No.

I can see someone over at that blue house.

Yes.

Yeah, but it's a very, it's a fairly busy road is it, to *[name of town deleted]*, this road I mean?

[Name deleted] *Road.*

[Name deleted] Road, yeah.

Yes it is.

Mmm.

It's a very busy road.

Mmm, so you probably wouldn't be feeling very much inclined to be having too much to do with your neighbours across the road, I suppose.

No, I used to but the lady died and the husband died, so I speak to these over here but they, no, no I don't know the ones in that house there. The gentleman up there died too.

In the blue house?

No, no, the cream one.

Oh, so which is the one with the child?

This one here and they have a little girl too yes.

[Conversation deleted.]

There are two of our churches over, just over the street, The Salvation Army.

Oh so, have you, is, have you been with that church for long?

I was christened in it.

Oh dear, goodness me.

I had five brothers and a sister and they all went to college and they're ministers.

So you're the only one who didn't?

No, I had one brother who didn't go.

Ah.

But he was the ... [Laughs.]

So you've got six brothers?

No five brothers

Yeah.

And one brother, one brother didn't go. The second eldest one didn't go but the others did.

And your sister did?

But they're not any, they're not officers now. They're all retired, [laughs] well and truly. You see my brother, the eldest one's 88.

[Laughs.]

And they're all alive.

And, do you think there's any reason for that, in the way they've lived their lives?

Well they never smoked or drank.

Mmm I think that's, that's a very important thing.

But they've all got heart trouble, the boys,

Mmm.

Because Mum [name deleted] had it too, so it must've been passed down somewhere or other, but I'm, I'm all right.

Is there anything you don't like about living here? Is there anything you'd like to change?

No, I like it. It's very nice.

Mmm, you manage to look after the house by yourself all right,

Yes.

And do you get help?

No help.

What about with the garden?

Oh the lawns. That's the only thing. And the rubbish is always taken away for me. He generally mows the lawns and takes the rubbish away. I pay him.

Mmm.

Which is fair enough, and he's quite willing to do anything I want here.

But you just pay him yourself? You don't get any government assistance for it?

No, no. I just pay him.

So this seems like a nice warm house. It doesn't look like it would be too costly to heat.

I don't worry about it.

[Laughing.] Don't you? [Laughing.]

[Laughing.] *I think if you want to be warm you've got to pay for it.*

Mmm, this is gas is it?

It's electric.

Oh.

We used to have it, [loud noise when tape bumped] no, we used to be gas but we changed over. At least I changed over. I got that put in after my husband died.

So this would be on Hydro heat?

Well [pause] gas was just as dear as the ... electricity ... just about. We didn't have wood anyway. There's no place here to stack wood. Not here, unless it's put out in the garage.

Yes, you really do need to stack it somewhere out of the wet don't you.

Yes.

Or it's not much use having it.

No. Anyway this is much easier and tidier too.

Mmm. Well you must know a lot of people in the town?

I had to get to know them.

When you first came here?

Yeah.

Mmm, so ...

I go out to Wars' Widows Legacy and you get to know people, women folk. Pensioners Union, I joined up with that. And I can go, if I want to the Citizens, Senior Citizens.

Mmm. [Laughs.] So what do you think of the Senior Citizens?

Oh well, I've only just started going. I haven't been very often to there. No, I mostly, it's getting down there, that's the thing.

So where are they?

They're at [name of town deleted].

Ah.

Then we have Home League at The Salvation Army; that's like a guild, so we go on trips.

So you do quite a lot then?

Oh yeah, too much.

[Laughs.]

Last week was too much. [Laughing.] *I had to recover from it. See we have our luncheons and one thing and another.*

Yeah.

Went to Kempton last week and had that mid-year Christmas dinner.

Oh yes, Ausmas.

Yes.

All the way to Kempton.

Yes, Legacy's going to the hotel for lunch, or I don't know next Monday or the Monday after. I've got it all written down because I do forget at times. [Laughs.]

And so your life must have changed quite a lot since your husband died?

Oh yes. [With emphasis.]

Yes, you probably would have done things with him before.

I had to nurse him.

Oh, how long was that for?

Well at least two years I showered him [pause] and dressed him [pause] you know. Yes [pause] that's what we do. We care for one another.

Yes but often, well I've spoken to some other people down here, and you know single women whose husband's died, and it seems to be mostly the woman who looks after her husband and then he dies and then she's left on her own and who looks after her?

That's right.

Yes. [Laughs.]

Yes. Ah, my husband died in '84. I went to Queensland. I went to Queensland that year, after he died and I went in '85 and ended up in hospital for six months.

What was the trouble?

I had cancer and burst appendix and peritonitis.

Mmm.

So I had both operations, both together.

So the, the peritonitis was to do with the cancer was it?

I think it was the cancer.

Yeah.

Well I've never had any trouble since.

Yeah, so what sort of cancer was it?

Bowel.

Yeah, so it probably affected your appendix then.

Well I reckon that's what burst the appendix

Yeah.

And ah, of course I was burst three or four, five days I think ...

You're lucky that you didn't die. Mmm, so you were in hospital though so.

I was pretty, pretty, yes oh well ...

Six months?

Yes I was up there six months.

So how long were you in hospital?

Oh, only twelve days. He wouldn't let me come home for quite a while.

Your son?

No, the doctor.

Oh, you couldn't travel?

No, I had to keep going back to him you see.

Mmm.

And ah, no I got all clear and I've never had any trouble since but I was a very sick person I can tell you. My daughter, the day I had the operation I woke up and there's my daughter with the two little ones standing beside me bed. She just threw everything in the case and caught the plane and come straight up.

Mmm.

And my eldest daughter couldn't come till the week after. She came up too. No, no she said Mum it was pretty tough going there for a while with you.

Mmm.

But I wasn't frightened of dying. Some people are I think.

Mmm

But I wasn't, if it's God's will that's how it was and [pause] I was quite prepared to meet him.

Well you must be very strong to have got through that at an older age.

Yes, I think it would've [pause] been very upsetting for my husband and I was very pleased that it didn't happen before he died.

Mmm.

Yes, because he used to say to me I'm not much good to you dear. Yes I said you are. You're company. And he had a wonderful memory and read a lot.

So even when he was disabled with the rheumatoid arthritis?

Yes.

He could still read.

He couldn't move. He had osteo too but in the, he died with leukemia.

Mmm.

Well it's a germ in the blood isn't it?

Well it's a cancer in the blood.

Yes.

Mmm.

That's right. I know it's cancer of the blood.

Mmm.

So he had a pretty rough time. He had it all over him, the rheumatoid and the osteo.

And then he got the leukemia.

Yes, he had it... Oh I don't know how long he had it before he died but the doctor told me that it can come on very quickly.

Yes. Yeah. It depends on ... There's different forms and some forms, people die rather quickly.

Yes and I think he only had it for about a fortnight.

Mmm.

He might've had it a bit longer.

Mmm.

But he went down very, hill very quickly.

Mmm. I suppose in a way that was merciful for him and for you.

Oh no, I didn't want him to die. No, no.

But it might have been harder to see him suffer longer.

Yes. It was hard to see him suffer because he couldn't spend a night in bed.

With the arthritis?

Mmm. He used to wait till I went to sleep then he'd come out here and sit by the fire. [Laughs.]

And this is him up here, this picture?

Yes.

In uniform.

Yes. That's him.

So he was in, he served in the Second World War?

For over five years.

So whereabouts?

He went to the Middle East and got a [inaudible] thing of malaria. They had it over there and he got it. He must've caught it; he must've caught it in India when they landed there. And uh, they said it was unheard of in the Middle East. Oh he was over there for oh, then he went to Borneo, no not Borneo, New Guinea twice. Went over Kokoda Trail.

Mmm.

Right over to the back of Lae.

Mmm.

Then he ended up in Borneo and ah, he was there when peace was signed.

Mmm, so did it have a bad effect on him? He must have seen active service.

Oh yes he saw active service all right. He ended up as a cook yeah but he's seen active service. He never talked about it very much. They never do.

Mmm, yes this is beautiful with the medals and the photos; beautifully presented.

Yeah, my daughter had that done for me, [name deleted], the one that's up at [name of town deleted]. Yes. She's, she's got all his life in the service and I asked her to get me a paper on it, yes.

So she's written it up?

No, where she got the medals from, they got it for her.

Oh so it's got where he's been.

Yes, and everything, all of it. They couldn't put on that he'd been to Borneo because he hadn't been there quite long enough. He'd only been there ...

When they had peace?

They had to be there, I think she said at least 22 days and he hadn't been there that long.

Yes.

It's being taped isn't it?

Yes, so it must have been quite an adjustment for you when he died.

Yes, yes it was very terrible.

But how long did it take you before you sort of started adjusting?

A long while; if you let it, it can still affect you now; whether it's been a few weeks or 45 years married.

That's a long time to be together.

Yes, we had our ups and downs [laughs] but I think when he came back from the war was the hardest. It was getting to know one another again. You get different ideas. I grew up.

So you were more independent when he came back? [Inaudible.]

He used to say to my daughter, that's the youngest, you can't tell your mother not to go and do anything because she'll go and do it. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

He'd said you might as well give up. But you see for years I had to do everything and, and he couldn't. See he was told to give up work and I was told to do work. But really I think by doing what he was told, that's why he lived longer. See he had 17 more years after he having his coronary. He was only 53.

After he had what?

He had a coronary.

He had a coronary?

Yeah.

Around the time he gave up work?

Fifty-three he was when he had the coronary. Oh yes. It was touch and go. He was in intensive care for a fortnight.

And then he lived until seventy?

Just about seventy ...

Mmm ...

So it's worth doing what they advise you to do. You see that's why I did so much and, but that didn't hurt me. I was quite healthy. Yeah, we were happy.

Before I turned on the tape you were saying something about the good thing, about that the good thing about being in your own home was that you have your independence. That's ...

Yes, that's how I look at it. I think it's, if you can manage to live in your own home it's better for you. You've got your own independence and you can please yourself and you don't have to ... Well you can please yourself when you do the work and if you don't feel like doing it today, well there's always tomorrow.

Yeah.

I don't know what you think about that.

Yes well I think it feels better when you have those choices, doesn't it and then ...

But I do cook a hot meal every day. I think that's essential and elderly people don't do that.

Yes, a lot of people neglect their diet, especially when they live on their own, yes.

Yes, and I think I look after mine too well. [Laughing.]

What's that?

[Laughing.] I've put on weight.

And you know there was something recently on the ABC that said that they've found they used to think you know they'd like people to lose weight and cut down, but they've actually found that if older people ate more they lived longer.

Well our side of the family, my side of the family, all lived to a fair age.

Mmm, and so what sort of meal do you cook? Do you have that in the middle of the day?

Oh, I mostly have it at night-time but of a Sunday I have it in the middle of the day.

And what do you have?

Oh, I have meat and chicken. I have mostly chicken but I went out yesterday, on Friday with my daughter and I decided I was going to have a bit of different meat.

Mmm.

So I had, there was some pork you know, cut up. I made a dish out of that today; some nice sweet and sour.

Mmmm, so not just plain cooking?

I didn't, oh I usually have a, carry a tin of some sweet and sour in the cupboard but I couldn't find any today so I just stuck in, put in some pineapple in it and different things in myself. It was edible. It wasn't too bad.

So do you cook for your family when they come to visit?

No, they don't come now because my son-in-law he works all hours of the night and they used to come every Friday night for tea but they haven't done for a long while.

So your daughter comes in the day?

She comes three days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

And where does she come from?

She lives up the [name deleted] Road, past [name of town deleted]. Yes, [name deleted]'s a good girl. That's the baby of the family.

And she's retired?

Yes, her husband is the accountant down there at [name of town deleted]; one of our accountants.

In a bank or ... No an accountant, a chartered accountant.

Yes a chartered accountant. Yes and their son works for his Dad and that young lass up there [indicating a photo], she's off to England on September the seventh.

Which one?

The one with the little boy.

With the white dress?

Yes.

So she's grown up now?

She's 25.

Mmm.

She's going to England to Essex to teach; a school teacher. She's got work. She has work to go to and she's only just found that out this last week. Yes, yes, I'm going to miss my youngest grand daughter.

She's your youngest granddaughter?

Yes.

So this is your youngest grandson with her is it?

Yes, and he, he works with his Dad.

Oh that's, that's the ...

That one.

Mmm, and so they're not all in Tasmania. You said one's in Queensland.

One's in Queensland. The eldest girl's in Hobart, at [name of suburb deleted] and that's her three daughters.

Mmm.

[Name deleted]'s just turned 34, 35. That's the one this side. The one in the middle's, [name deleted], she's the youngest one. And [name deleted] on that side; she's married and they live in Melbourne.

Mmm, so how many children do you have?

Four.

Four, and what are they? Boys?

Only one boy.

Only one boy; so you've got four children and how many grand children.

Ah ten, I think there's ten.

And 21 great grand children.

Yes, but some of them are step.

Ah.

No there's 14 of my own.

And you've got step great grand children!

Yes.

Seven step great grand children?

Yes, oh they're like my own anyway.

So this is a bit ... Families have changed a lot haven't they? A lot more chopping and changing, a lot more freedom?

Well my son, his wife, they divorced and he married again, a lady with children of her own and that's how I came to have ...

And they've had children?

Yes.

And they're just as your other great grandchildren?

Definitely, yeah.

So they're step great grandchildren but actually they're step through your husband's new wife and her children?

That's right; oh they look on me as Nanny. They treat me well too.

Mmm.

Oh yes, oh yes. They won't be left out at all.

So you've been part of their life since they were born.

Oh yes, some of them. Oh yes. Especially one young lad and he's the eldest one and he's fourteen and I've nursed him as a baby.

And where do they live?

They live in Queensland. No New South Wales down at [name of town deleted].

It's close to Queensland.

Yes, it's not very far away.

So these are the ones you used to stay with but you had another one up there you used to...

No I stayed with my son and my daughter when she was there. She was at [name of town deleted], you know south of Brisbane. My son's at [name deleted] Island.

[Name deleted] Island? Where's that?

It's not far from the Gold Coast, you know.

It must be quite a job keeping track of them.

I tell you what I don't write letters. I get on the phone and I have a talk on the phone to each of them. It's more personal.

Yeah.

Because if I write to my son I know I'm not likely to get an answer, [laughs] so no I... I was only thinking that the other night. I don't write very often to them but I do ring them up.

Mmm.

Very often, quite a bit.

Even then there's so many you'd probably have to keep track of who you'd rung. [Laughs.]

My hands won't allow me to write too much any way.

No. So do you think of ... You don't think of moving from here?

No, I hope I live here for the rest of my life.

Mmm.

They like you to live in your own home anyway.

But they're not giving you any help are they? You're doing it all by yourself.

Oh well while I can do it, why not. I could get help. I guess so.

Yeah. I guess you could get help with the house work and you could get help with mowing the lawn but ...

Well I get the lawn mowed and I pay him myself and it's not very much.

Yeah.

It's only \$10, for an hour.

Yeah.

So if there was somebody else I'd be paying a lot more.

And how long's he been doing that?

Oh. I don't know how much longer he's going to be able to do it because he's 70 [laughs]. No he's been doing it for quite a few years.

And so he lives near here?

Just up the street.

So it's not an arrangement you want to change?

No, not really, not yet. Not till he can't do it. [Laughs.]

Cos he's very obliging. He comes and takes all my rubbish away, down to the tip and I pay him and everything.

And this is a three-bedroom house?

Yes.

Mmm, do you have people come and stay here? Family?

Oh yes.

Probably more your grand children?

They come and ... Oh my daughter comes in and pops in and I don't even know she's come. So all I have to do is switch on the electric blankets and air the beds out [laughing]. Yeah they all ... They come. They say Mum if we let you know we're coming, you'll just fuss.

Oh. So they don't want to put you to trouble.

Yeah, but it's always clean so why worry. Or at least I think it's clean.

Yes it's very clean, mmm. It's all well under control.

And as I say, if I can't do it today I'll do it tomorrow.

So you don't fuss and worry about the housework?

No. I know it could do with a spring clean. I used to do it every year up until about two or three years ago. I used to wash all the walls and [laughs] do it all you know. But oh there's only me who knows it's not done.

All the paint inside looks excellent. It looks in really good condition.

Oh well it's not that long ... There's not little children here to, to go around dabbing their fingers over all of the time is there. I know that I've got three little tykes; their mother doesn't bring them to stay because these are little tykes.

So these are great grandchildren.

Yes.

What about having the place ... You don't need much in the way of painting?

I think the outside could be painted because, it deteriorates and I know there's a little bit of... Some of the timber could be renewed. Yes I think the outside really, underneath the fascia boards because it's quite a while since they was done. I don't know how long.

So have you got any plans to do that?

No, well I've thought about it but it's as far as it got ...

So you wouldn't have trouble affording that? You'd be able to manage the cost.

Yes I'd manage the cost of it because you know I get the War Widow's pension.

So you're better off than people on the old age pension.

Oh definitely yes, and then too there's another thing, I get, not a lot, but I get this a little bit for old age.

A part old age pension.

It all depends on what you've got. You can get both pensions.

Yeah, I suppose it helps to have a, son who's an accountant.

I don't worry about him. I don't pay income tax. I don't get paid enough. See War Widow's pension is not taxed.

Which is a really good thing.

And why shouldn't it be?

Yeah.

I, I think really myself with the man that come from the War; they should be given a pension straight away because it does something to them.

Mmm.

Yeah. It shatters their nerves.

Yes, yes, so you found that with your husband?

Yes.

It was that way with my father, very much so, yeah.

And I think it should be given to 'em because they went away and fought for their country and the best years of their life; young years. [Husband's name deleted] was 25 when he went away and, we was only married for twelve months. And I wasn't very old. I married at 18. Eighteen and five months, but I don't regret being married at 18 years and five months but ...

So you had children before he went?

No.

So you didn't have your family until after he came back?

No, no.

Well that was probably quite fortunate.

Oh well I had them in between the years.

Oh so when he came back?

No, I had one when, I had two when he was in New Guinea. It was very hard on the children; very hard on him too.

And did you work during that period?

Ah, I did till I had children. I worked for a little while. We didn't get very much either in those days, not very much at all.

You mean it was a struggle financially?

No, we didn't get very much money. I forget what we used to get. I used to be in the Army. Well [husband's name deleted] got the specialist money too because he got to be a cook so he made that over to me, but that was after the children. And we didn't get much for working in those days.

But life was a lot simpler wasn't it.

Oh much, and I think people were happier. It doesn't matter how much money they give you [inaudible].

So when he came back you bought the farms or were you on a farm already?

He would've come and went working for Mr [name deleted]. Mr [name deleted], he's an orchardist, and then we bought our little farm, a small farm and lived there for a while and then you know, my

Dad and my mother died and then we bought the main farm from my Dad. My Dad was the owner out there.

So you've probably done a lot of hard work in your life then? As a farmer's wife?

Yes. I did a lot of hard work when I was a young girl because my mother was never very well. She had a very bad heart so I was the one that stayed at home more or less so although I got married I was always around Mum.

And where did you come in the family?

I was the fourth one. I'm middle girl.

So the middle of nine or?

Seven.

Seven, yes often there is one in a family isn't there, who stays and helps.

Well we did have, we did buy land in Queensland and Mum and Dad did too, but of course Mum died. We had two blocks in Queensland and we sold them and stayed here. I stayed here because of Mum, more or less, too.

So she wasn't well enough to move?

No, no, she ended up ... she had three strokes.

So you looked after her?

No she died in hospital. We were looking after her but ...

How old were you?

I was 29 when my mother died. She was only 64; too young. Yeah it was too young. But I can understand why she didn't have a long life. She had rheumatic fever three times. That's what affected her heart.

So when she was a child?

Well her mother died when she was three, so she had a hard, sort of a hard life. She came from [name of town deleted]. She was a [name deleted], the first person to open it up. Well, you've heard of [name deleted]?

Was he an artist? [Laughs.]

[Name deleted], *no I don't think, no. He lived in Hobart. I couldn't say what [inaudible], whether he was an artist, not at all. You know I've often wondered that myself, yeah.*

Oh. So where did the family involvement with The Salvation Army begin. Was that when your mother was, was your mother with The Salvation Army?

Yes I think so.

So they helped her when she was small?

I don't know whether they came and helped. Oh when she was younger? Oh I don't know. No she came up from [name of town deleted] and worked for the family of [name deleted] who used to live at [name of town deleted].

There's a big house there.

Yes, that's right.

And what, she met her husband.

And met my Dad; of course Gran and Grandfather were Salvation Army too.

So your grandparents were Salvation Army too on your mother's side?

No, father's side.

Father's side, oh.

I think there was a mission. You know City Mission. I don't know enough. We never ask our parents enough. I often wonder about it. Yes we were all christened in The Salvation Army. Could be worse.

Mmm.

My husband said they were the ones that were up front in the War, The Salvation Army. They'd bring the coffee and tea and help ...

[Tape stopped].

Interviewee 23

How long have you lived here?

A year and two months.

That's not very long. And can you tell me about where you used to live before you moved here?

How far back? Laughs.

Laughs. Well as far back as you like, but starting with the place that you lived at before you came to this one.

Ah, the place I lived at before I came here was a rented unit in [name deleted] Avenue, [name of suburb deleted].

Mmm, and how long were you there?

There, for about 18 months.

Mmm, so it was a temporary arrangement?

Yes, temporary, until I got this, simply because my three children are all married and live on the mainland.

Mmm.

So for me it's much easier. I've kept my friends here, which are very important to me because when my husband was alive we were mostly on postings overseas.

Mmm.

And the children were at boarding, were in boarding school.

Mmm.

But I felt it was easier to come here where I have friends. Ah [laughing] it meant I had to get rid of a lot of belongings, which would be easier for the children, you know, when I sort of popped off [laughing], to get rid of.

Yes.

And originally we lived in [name of suburb deleted] when we worked overseas so yes; it just seemed to work out.

So the house before the rented house was a house in Sandy Bay?

Ah, no. The house before that was, sort of rented accommodation in Melbourne because we came back from overseas and then we spent a little time ... [Lowers voice.] Where was the other house? [Raises voice again.] Yes it was a house we had for a short time; was in Sandy Bay.

Mmm.

And then I decided to sort of get rid of you know, various bits and pieces and things, so I could move into a smaller place.

Mmm.

Ah, which was [name deleted] Avenue, and there I applied for this.

Mmm.

And this took about almost a year I would think, because I turned two down because they didn't have a view.

Mmm.

You know they didn't have a ... And then finally got this one.

So you, when you were living in the rented accommodation, you were virtually waiting?

Yes.

To come into here?

Yes.

Mmm.

Yes, yes.

And also in your married life there was a fair period when you weren't here because you travelled a lot and there wasn't any point owning a house. Is that right?

Mostly we came back. We sort of put our things in government houses or it wasn't for very long and that sort of thing.

So you're government, your husband worked for the government?

Yes. He was, he was with the Department of [name deleted].

Oh. Mmm. And uh I suppose, I mean clearly your husband's died.

Yes.

And so that must have influenced your housing decision.

Yes.

About coming here?

Yes.

And how long ago did your husband die?

This rather embarrasses me because, I think it's about six years ago [taking into account her age now and the age difference between them, it would have been 16 years ago]. As I've explained to people who, [talks slowly] it was such a sudden shock, that sort of thing because he was six years older, eight years older than I, and previously he'd been in the Royal Navy.

Mmm.

And then went to Burma as a colonial officer and picked up all sorts of weird and wonderful wogs there.

Mmm.

Then came here and worked, came to Canberra and worked for [name deleted] and, when he died it was just you know so much of a shock, that it's all misty and vague to me. You know I just got through it and dates didn't matter.

Mmm.

In fact I was speaking to a friend at church, who's a doctor, who's wife died maybe about six months ago. And he said when did my husband die, and I told him.

Mmm.

Exactly what I've told you. And he said yes I understand, and I was so pleased [laughing].

Mmm.

Because I was beginning to think people thought I was a bit peculiar.

Mmm. Goodness. I can sense how you felt.

Yes.

That it must have been such a devastating thing for you.

Yes. And it happened in [name of town deleted] where my son lives ah, so it was just family. Both girls came; one from Brisbane and one from Sydney, but my friends were unable, who were unable to get there and ...

So you were saying with your son and it was sudden.

Yeah.

And how old was he?

He must've been ah, about ah 64 or 65.

Mmm. Yeah that's, you wouldn't expect him to die.

No. [Pause.]

So.

It's not, it's the most ... I've never known anybody well before who died and I think probably that's what [pause], that's what troubled me. We were both overseas when my mother and father died and it was too far to come back.

So and that's hard to deal with isn't it, mmm.

Oh. Yeah.

It was so unexpected.

Yeah.

And so what led you to choose to live here?

Here?

You must've given some thought to ...

Hobart you mean or this?

Well in Hobart, and here.

Hobart because I have friends here; here because I wanted to be, I'd always when I went on holidays have to arrange for a gardener, sort of organise the cleaning woman so she didn't get upset because [laughs] she didn't have any work to do while I was away. And my great aunt lives at [name of retirement village deleted], down here.

Mmm.

And I'd been down to see her and of course she has an enormous unit, which I didn't want, so she said why didn't I see the fellow in charge of the, the places of accommodation and see what they had up here. So I saw him and he showed me first one, which was down there without the view.

Mmm.

And it seemed so small after what I'd been accustomed to and then a couple of months later showed me another one and that was [laughs] much the same.

Mmm.

And I was getting a bit hysterical and going [inaudible] [laughs]. Anyway he rang one day and said he thought he had the place that would suit me.

Mmm.

This was occupied by a married couple.

So it's bigger than the ones that you saw?

You can see from the colour of that narrow board on the top, where it's been built on.

Oh, so they extended it?

So this bit here. Yes, they extended it and, to me it just made all that difference.

And you get more sun.

I get all the sun, yes. And, I just felt that this would be fine for me.

Mmm. And so is it very expensive to move into a place like this?

It's ah, oh heavens I can't remember. I'm not good at that sort of thing.

Mmm.

This, this [inaudible] ... yes I can tell you. Now this one cost \$93,000 but we pay about between \$200 and \$300 a month, maintenance.

Mmm. So it's quite high.

It's quite high.

Mmm.

We don't have to do it, I mean, not that you'd think of it now. But they clean the windows you know, three times a year or something.

Mmm.

We have the most marvellous maintenance man who [pause] can fix practically anything.

So if you've got any problems someone can come and fix them for you?

Yes, yes. Absolutely.

Mmm.

And [pause] ...

Which is a worry when you're on your own and you're not used to doing those sort of things.

Ah heavens, no he does everything and he's so happy and [pause] careful about it and all this sort of thing. [pause] ... We're not allowed to pay him or, so anything like that because he's employed by the home but once when he did some very special things for me, I just sort of said John you'd better hide this as you're going back [laughs] and gave him a bottle of bubbly or something, you know which I thought was fair enough and uh, the garden's done for us. Ah, you know in fact everything's done. Everything's organised.

Mmm. And is there any sort of community life here?

Yes, we have a meeting once a month where we have the meeting of what we call the villa residents. You see the row underneath there, there are three lots, three, three divisions; the first is the people who are sick and can't do anything for themselves. You'll see them go to the dining room on crutches or these things [indicates as if using a walking frame].

Mmm.

And this was another of the reasons I chose here. The second lot have rooms, like a motel unit

Mmm, mmm.

Ah, but without c... cooking.

Like a bed-sit?

Yes, yes, which is that row down there; the hospital's along there. This is one of the few places with a hospital.

I didn't know there was a hospital.

And my doctor will practice here, you know operating or anything here.

So if you need something.

Yes, and uh this is the [pause] third lot.

So the most independent.

The villa residents. We're quite independent, yes. So we have a villa resident's meeting once a month.

How many villa residents are there?

There must be about 50 I guess; something like that.

That's a lot!

You know it fluctuates quite a bit.

Mmm.

And after that we sort of have, you know sort of cocktail party drinks and [name of retirement village deleted] send up savouries, and all that sort of thing.

So this is, [name of retirement village deleted] and [name of nursing home deleted], they're managed by the same organisation?

Yes, yes ...

I have heard people say how wonderful [name of retirement village deleted] is.

[Name of retirement village deleted] is superb but it's, [aunt's name deleted]'s villa, [aunt's name deleted]'s villa is one ... no two bedrooms I think, no three bedrooms.

Mmm.

Three bedrooms. She has an enormous garage which is much bigger than this [indicating her unit], garage and workshop. Ah, she has en suite in her bedroom and then she has a bath, which I don't have [pause] here; a bath, shower and you know vanity thing is in the second bathroom, so they are really you know quite magnificent.

It must have cost a lot.

Well yes, they unfortunately they could never have children and her husband was very well off so, although you see the rents are going up all the time and she's sort of ... Because she's so much older, you see she's 90, when a bill comes in if it's gone up just a little bit, although she has you know a lot of money put away she still gets a bit shaky about it [laughs] if it's going up, just because of her age.

Mmm. Yeah.

But they are really superior ...

Mmm.

Places, down there, but for me you see I have, unbelievably I have a lass who comes every fortnight and she'll do the vacuuming for me and the you know scrubbing the bathroom and kitchen floors and that sort of thing.

Mmm.

She's only here for two hours.

Mmm.

But ...

So you have your own vacuum cleaner?

Yes. It's in the garage. This is the only thing that's rather a nuisance, the storage. My vacuum cleaner, which I've had, I think since I don't know when; you know one of those long Hoover things.

Mmm.

A really powerful thing: that sort of blew up. I think something got stuck in it and [name deleted] said to me, that's the lass who cleans for me, you can get ones now that are very portable and you just hold them up here and that sort of thing.

A little Hoover, yeah.

Yes I think it cost about \$95 or something, so I bought her one of those and that's what she uses.

So is that, the one who cleans, is that like a service that comes in from outside?

No that's my, my, my personal ...

Mmm.

Thing, yeah, mmm.

Yeah, so is she the same one that used to clean your house?

No, no, no.

Mmm, and you probably told me a few things about this but I'm going to ask the question again to see what ...

Mmm, mmm.

So what do you like about living here?

What do I like? I like the villa. I like the view especially.

Mmm.

I like the feeling, particularly in this row here, that people don't encroach. I'm very friendly with the lady, [name deleted] next door. A couple of times a week you know we'll visit each other for a drink or something.

Mmm.

But I, mmm, I sort of make sure that it's not, not more frequent

Mmm.

Because I don't want to be you know [pause] ...

Mmm, but you don't yeah. I feel what you're going to say, you feel you like, you want your own space and freedom.

Yes but because we get on well together and she's fairly new and I like her, I mean I get on well with everybody and occasionally, there's another lady down there, I'd say come and have a drink and then she'll ask me back, but that's only three or four months or something like that.

Mmm.

The other thing I like is of course the security and there are two retired priests who live in that house over there.

Mmm.

And they sort of do death duties for people who live down here.

Mmm.

It's a Roman Catholic establishment but I'm Anglican.

And it doesn't make any difference?

No difference at all.

Mmm.

And I get on quite well with the priests.

But you feel there's some sort of security knowing they're there?

Ah, no not really. It's just; they're just nice to talk to.

Mmm.

They're there, I think because they're both very ill.

Mmm.

And they've sort of been retired there but they still sort of do pastoral care [pause] with anyone who wants. We just chat with them and meet outside but, what else? Yes, they're very good in the office.

So where's the office?

The office is [getting up and going to the window] ... There's the front door down there where you come down that ramp there and where that lounge is, it's there. You go through there to reception and the office.

So where's the hospital?

The hospital's along here.

Mmm. So this is all just office buildings here?

No. They're, the house ... This is the kitchen here. The houses, those, those sort of motel like things along there are those units. You know I explained something about those units. Down on ... You can't see it from here but the last row down [pause], there's a hedge about this high, with blocks above I think there's one, there's one dependent perhaps two houses like this before the main road. Ah, [pause] and what else. There is a big, big building; there's a big, big, big reception room straight in, where you go in through the reception doors where we have the meeting and drinks and stuff.

Mmm.

There after that.

Oh so that's like, it's like a community meeting place?

Yes, yes.

And so is the dining room there as well?

Ah they have a very tiny dining room, which is, those curtains there on the end.

Mmm.

And they are for the people who could make their way to the dining room.

So others would get ...

The others would be served in bed.

Mmm.

Yeah. Well not in bed, in their room.

So you do all your own cooking?

Oh yes, yes.

Mmm.

Yes. Come look at the kitchen [gets up]. I found this very tiny to start off with [laughs].

Laughs. It is too.

It is big enough for my own use.

Yeah.

But again it has more cupboards than you know, the others I saw.

And I suppose your parsley. I love parsley.

Mmm, yeah.

Yeah so you have to get into a different way of cooking when you're on your own don't you?
I'm finding that because I'm mostly on my own these days.

Yes.

You don't, I don't ...

It's not as interesting, you know.

Laughs. Yeah.

I just, I just do it quickly. I normally have, National Council lunches every second week and I lunch with a friend every week.

Mmm.

So, oh and then another friend we sort of think about it, which is about every second week. Then I belong to ... I'm on the auxiliary at [name of nursing home deleted] [laughing] believe it or not.

Laughs.

And we have a lunch every second month. So I get out.

Mmm.

To quite a few things.

Mmm. That sounds like quite a busy social life.

It is, in fact I've just, just resigned from president of National Council because, it's a three-year term and it's very demanding.

You'd have to travel would you?

Yes, ah, yes although I didn't ... sort of up North to the Launceston branch and that sort of thing or when they have conferences on the mainland ... and you see, they have ... a meeting, the executive meeting first Wednesday of the month, third Wednesday the general meeting. Then they'd have the

lunch, every second month and then because I'm, I still am the child and family convenor, I meet various people from the government you know to find out what's happening and where and stuff.

What do you mean by child and family convenor?

Well we each have; we each have a sort of portfolio thing. There's an environment person, there's an ...

Oh for the National Council of [name deleted]. So as well as being president you're also the child and family convenor?

Yes.

Mmm.

So, I've found because I have one child in Brisbane, one in [name of town deleted] and one in Sydney previously before the president thing I could sort of do them all in about three months or something. You know the one three months. I found that I couldn't do that being president. I had to do them separately. And [laughing] I'll show you a thing that will probably explain it better to you [goes to get something]. That's the last newsletter. I find it a bit embarrassing; it's so [laughing] ...

[Reading.] Mmm, it's lovely.

I just can't. If I do something I want to be able to do it properly without feeling I'm not pulling my weight.

So it does explain it very clearly. So normally, and you still do that, you spend about three months of the year on the mainland, or you're doing that in separate months?

I do it in, in separate; school holidays [laughs] you see, when they have school holidays over there although the New South Wales ones, the mum and the two daughters. The mum works at university. The elder daughter has been through university and is working and the other daughter who was an adopted Vietnamese, because that family also were overseas, she's second year at the ... What's the university? Not Sydney.

Sydney University of Technology?

Yes, yes. She's there. She's a little Vietnamese. Well she's not little now. She's 19.

Mmm. Yes and uh ...

[Name deleted], my son's in [name of town deleted]. He has lots and lots of land but also works, maybe three days a week or something like that. Ah, [name deleted] is in Brisbane. She is a teacher of

English as a foreign language, whatever that's called, at [name deleted] University. No that's where she graduated from... Maybe she's at Brisbane. I'm not quite sure.

Mmm, mmm.

And she has two girls sort of nearing the end of high school, going on hopefully to university.

What about [name deleted]'s children?

He has two boys. [Name deleted], he's in his final year and head boy at [name deleted] school; and [name deleted] the younger one, by two or three years younger, he's following up behind [name deleted].

You mean he's the school captain?

Yes, yes, yes that's it yes. They're all jolly brainy. They must've got it from my husband [laughs].

Oh it's usually more to do with the mother [inaudible]. Research shows that children's level of education is more closely correlated with the mother's level of education than with the father's.

Oh well you see, what happened with my husband was; he was actually born in [name deleted] Islands but the family had a house in [name of city deleted] [pause] as well. And when he was sort of school age he went to [name of city deleted] and went to [name of school deleted] School, which is you know one of "the" schools in [name of city deleted]. And then his last year of school war was declared; so then he went straight into the Navy. It was sort of said you know because you come from the [name deleted] you know the sea; we'll make you sort of an officer on a minesweeper, that sort of thing.

Mmm.

Ah, then after the war he did the Civil Service examinations and went to Burma as a, as a colonial officer. Then when the Brits were kicked out of Burma, [laughing] he came here.

And that's when you met him?

Yes, yes.

So he stayed.

Oh yes. We got married. He stayed. He worked for [name deleted] for a long time. He did his degree here actually because he hadn't been to university in, you know he went straight into the forces.

Mmm. [Pause.] So is there anything you don't like about living here?

[Laughing.] *Only the fact that I'm too far from the children, but that's you know, that's a...*

You can't be near all of them.

That's a silly reason, yes.

But some people that I've talked to you know, not that they've done it yet but are thinking of things like, if they've got children spread like yours, of going to live somewhere; I said why would you want to be there and they said well it's equidistant from the three, that sort of thing. [Laughs.]

Yeah. I don't think that works.

Mmm.

Possibly because you see I have lived anywhere and everywhere [laughs] in my married life and I see that it's, to come back to my roots and people I knew from childhood.

Because you were born and grew up here?

Yes, yes, yes. And you see it's no problem now, I fly over. I used to drive but I've sold the big car and I've got a little one now so I don't feel like taking the little car on mainland roads.

Mmm. And so with your neighbours, you've told me a little bit about your neighbours. You've got two that are friends.

Yeah.

And so if you need someone to go to for help I suppose you can go to your neighbours.

I should probably, depending on what sort of help I needed, [pause] if it was medical help I'd go to the reception.

Yeah, so you've got other sources of help.

Yeah.

Unlike someone who just lives in the suburbs, nearby you've got help.

And I'm lucky because my GP, you know in whom I have enormous faith, and I just think she's tremendous; she does, she will come here. I don't quite know how it works. I think, I think they must have to be accepted by the organisation over here. Her mother lives round here somewhere so you know,

I don't know. But certainly she comes here, not that I've ever had her here. I've been reasonably healthy.

She comes here to the hospital?

But she can come here.

And she sees the other people. She's got visiting rights?

Yes, yes.

Yes I don't understand that either.

I don't quite understand how it works.

Because you'd think for you, you would, you oughtn't to be any different from just an independent private householder.

Mmm.

Although, you don't actually own the ... You do own the house?

I do own it yes, yes

Because you paid for \$93,000 for it?

Yeah, yeah.

It might've gone up now.

Oh it has yes, very much so, mmm.

So it's a stratum title unit and you own it?

Yes and the thing is you see there's no more space here to build anymore.

Yeah, it's just, yes it's very fortunate to have such a good position [inaudible] here, although you know I don't know, personally I don't know that I'd like anything smaller than this, like some of the ones further down are just that bit smaller than this one. Some of the ones along here are a bit smaller than this as well.

Well there by this bit here, they're that much smaller, yeah.

Yeah, I think it needs to be this big.

Yes it makes a difference. See hardly any of these residents have been able to bring a silly cabinet, what ever you call it

A buffet or sideboard or something like that?

Yes, and a lounge and two lounge chairs.

And so you mean the kitchen, the kitchen as well as the [indicating] here, that was extended all the way along?

No, the kitchen, from where ever it was ... This was always there, from there.

Mmm.

I think. I've had trouble working it out actually but ...

So they did extend the kitchen a bit, but ...

If you look, yes if you look at the others you'll see that the kitchen is extended a bit. I don't know if you can see it on the jambs.

Oh the jambs.

Yes you can see it on the jambs; that bit there.

Mmm. It might seem like a small amount of space but it's very important, and I mean

Huh! Yeah!

One of my aims is to provide some suggestions about you know what is good housing.

Yes.

For older people.

Yes.

Sort of so that, that, there are better options in the future.

Yes.

But I know that in public housing some of the places are very small and you hear them say that, you know about, to live in this house I have ...

Yeah

To have, like if they have a lounge suite.

Yeah.

They can't have a table you know for sit-down meals.

Yes.

Although you don't have, you wouldn't be able to have people here to sit-down meals, or just two of you.

Oh yeah. I have one person for a sit down meal.

Mmm.

Or I lay things out there.

Oh and you just eat on your knees?

Or there, and we eat on our knees, yeah, mmm.

But that's no big issue for you?

No!

Yeah.

No!

In fact sometimes it's more comfortable to sit on a lounge chair. We had that at home. We had dining room but with three children so they could all have a room; it was just a three-bedroom house and had a fourth room and when we had that arrangement we'd just sit with our meals on our knees and it was very social.

Yeah, yeah.

But I mean it's a nice thing sitting around a table too.

Well the only times I've ever had that is when we were overseas and we had servants [laughing] you know.

When you sat around a table?

Yeah, mmm. Oh of course you know as I was growing up there were only two, two, my brother and myself and we sat [showing how she sat at the table as a child] [laughing].

Oh we did it. Very definitely!

Laughing. Very definitely, yes.

And you had to use your knife and fork the right way and sit up straight and ...

Laughing. Yes, yes, yes.

Yes, the good old-fashioned way.

Yes. [Laughing.]

People have become a lot more casual haven't they? I think it was TV that did it.

Yes. Oh yes!

Because people needed to become a bit more casual to eat on their knee.

Well I'm hopeless here myself. I sit here and have you know dinner on a plate and watch TV.

That's what I do too. I go home from work and I make my dinner and I try and time it so, I can go and sit down and watch the news and have my dinner.

Yes, yes and you see I have the TV in the bedroom as well which is you know, absolutely appalling I think.

[Laughs.] But you like it?

I love it and, and I have to make a conscious effort to read books.

Because it's so easy to watch the TV.

So easy to watch TV, mmm, mmm.

But you get out of the way of it. It's nice to have a habit of reading.

Oh yes, mmm, mmm.

Mmm and, do you think of any ways that you would like to, I mean if you had a choice and that, you know how would you change this? You know if you wanted to have it a bit different, what sort of changes would you make to it?

Well in here, because of the circumstances I don't think I'd make any changes. You see people say to me, oh what a pity you don't have a balcony out there.

Mmm, mmm.

Well you see, the ones underneath, the bottom ones, do have a little balcony and I say well, this for me is enough. When we were living in Asia we had balconies everywhere.

Mmm.

In the summer it's too hot. In the winter it's too cold. [Laughs.]

Oh you [inaudible] it. [Laughing.]

And, when the wind blew the other night, I mean you know I was frightened, had I had a balcony with furniture I'd have brought all the furniture in. It was just tremendous. And I don't think I need and you see there's always a cold sea breeze here.

Mmm, so it's actually more comfortable as you have it.

Yeah.

Well the windows are so big

Yes.

And they go all the way round.

Yes

I mean it's not as though your view's you know, restricted.

Yes.

So there's a, so underneath all these villa units that have their entrance here, there are ones that have an entrance out to [inaudible]?

No, their entrance, in fact that's one of the things I didn't like about them, the one underneath me, the entrance is still there.

Mmm.

But it goes down a sort of dark little tunnel.

Mmm. But is it steps?

No, it's, it's [inaudible] ...

So it's under this.

Let's just come and see.

[Turns tape off.] [Turns tape on again.]

I mean this is the first time I've visited someone in a retirement unit, and it's so different.

Oh yeah.

You know a lot of my questions around you know what people might do, because some people are thinking about a retirement villa.

Yes.

But for a lot of them affordability's an issue, but I think I mean, this, I mean, if you get anything done I suppose they charge but it's still cheaper than rent but it's, it's certainly...

Yes, and see, you own it!

And it's reasonably affordable to buy it but I suppose again that's going to be becoming more and more difficult as house prices go up, but then the house is appreciating too.

Yes, yeah.

But I can't talk to you about changes because you've established yourself here.

Yeah.

And you've chosen the place where you want to spend the rest of your days basically.

Yes, yes.

But, how do you feel about being like being with more unwell and disabled people and near a hospital, I mean rather than say with families and children? I mean don't you sometimes think it'd be nice to have families and children?

I, I don't think like that and you see I don't mind the people round here because in Hong Kong I worked with some and, at [name of nursing home deleted] I'm on the auxiliary and serve [inaudible], all the time ...

Yeah.

I think I just accept it. I mean that's, yeah.

Mmm, a lot of people don't want to be near nursing homes but you know more what it's like there and a lot of people think that would be the last place I'd want to end up, was in a nursing home. I mean most people don't end up in a nursing home.

Yeah.

But still a lot of people think that, as they get older, that's what's going to happen. [Laughs.]

Well I suppose you see, unless I crash the car [laughing] or something and write myself off I'll probably end up down here.

You mean in the nursing home?

Oh I don't know.

How's your health?

Oh good!

And you don't have any health problems?

Oh no. As I say my doctor's fantastic.

Mmm.

The only problem I have, which I haven't had for about two years because I've got the medication, is asthma.

Mmm.

And, I have no real problem. You see I'm probably not a very good specimen because when I married and I suppose I've always been healthy and when we were overseas we always had staff you now and I didn't really have to do anything.

And you think this has benefited your health now in that you don't have any injuries?

Yes, yes. Probably. I've never really thought about it and of course we had, when my brother and I were growing up we always had the best of food, and ...

So yeah, so now that's what I was going to ask you. So you feel you've had a good healthy life and have had a lot of opportunities ...

Yes.

And your health is good?

Yes.

And you must have some knowledge about what to do now to look after your health?

Yes.

And all that sort of thing, so what do you do now to look after your health?

What can I tell you? I walk. [Name deleted] is along there.

Mmm.

You know [name deleted] Beach?

Of course, lovely.

I try to walk on there each day.

Mmm.

Ah, I walk quite a lot. I, I park my car in uh; Bathurst Street I think it's called. Is it called Bathurst Street?

Oh, you mean the Melville Street car park?

Melville Street, on the library; that one opposite.

Yes, yes.

And I walk up to Women Tasmania for a meeting, because I enjoy walking.

Mmm.

I came home late the other night and I knew I couldn't go to the beach [laughing] and I set off; somebody said was it you coming up the hill. And somebody else, oh the woman I was speaking to, you know, who came and said is it club day.

So is that one of your neighbours?

Yes. [Laughing.] I said oh, I'm going for a walk around here, so I went up and around past the church and up [name deleted] Avenue to the top of [name deleted], came down and I had to walk back up here and I thought whoa [laughing], I'm not going to do this; you know it was just as she found, it was one of those deceptive hills.

So it's not an ideal site really for housing for older people because of the slope.

Well you see most of them have cars.

Mmm.

This is residents' parking all along there.

Yeah, as people are getting older I mean they're being encouraged to stop driving at a certain stage aren't they?

Yeah.

A lot of people do it voluntarily anyway or they have a shoulder problem or vision or something and they can't drive anymore.

Yeah. I mean they have ... I've not been on one yet because [laughing] I don't seem to have the time, but they organise lunches at the various country clubs for the villa residents.

Mmm.

And ...

By bus?

And they go in the bus. The establishment pays two or three or four buses.

So if you couldn't drive you'd still have access to a social life and being able to get out with people?

Yes, yes and see the Hobart buses stop. I don't know if you noticed the bus shelter just outside and [inaudible]. There's a bus stop right there.

So you don't have to go down and up the whole hill; the bus comes up?

No, no.

Yeah. So if you couldn't drive, you'd still be in quite a good position here as far as getting around?

Yes, yes. Winter days wouldn't be so good because you know.

Oh because you'd be out in the cold then wouldn't you?

Yeah, take an umbrella or something like that, mmm, mmm.

Yeah, you might feel [inaudible]; because one of the things I'm thinking of is about my interest in this area is that it's really important for people to stay in society, participating and doing things.

Yes.

And some people, as they get older and often it is to do with their housing, when they haven't got a car can become really isolated, housebound.

Yes, yes.

And then people become depressed and their health deteriorates and ...

Well you see, there are the ... on that, on that special thing about housebound and all the rest of it, along the end of the steps where [name deleted] have a place where they collect our rubbish, you know one of these, there are about four or five of these wheelie bin things that are at the end of the street, at the end of the street.

So you all share them?

So we all share them; there's one for the papers, you know newspapers and things and [laughs] ostensibly one for ah, recycling, which I don't think is [inaudible] ...

[Checking tape.] I just get nervous sometimes [that the tape will stop or run out].

Ah one for recycling, [laughs] yeah that's not patronized very much.

Cans, glass?

Yeah, that sort of thing.

Well that's good.

So that means that [clears throat] where [name deleted] is, they need to walk along to the end of the street.

To put their rubbish out?

To put their rubbish ... Well most of us have a thing with a plastic bag in it. So when the plastic bag in it, you know those Woollies bags.

Mmm.

Gets full, we just knot it up and take it along there.

Mmm.

Mine gets full I suppose about every second day.

So that's in your kitchen?

Yeah.

Yeah.

So that means that I must [emphasised] go out every second day, even if it's only to put the rubbish out and you generally see one of the girls from down here because they park their cars there or you know the rest of us have gone to work.

So it's not, it's not isolated here?

No.

With all those people here.

No.

Ah, ah.

I, I'm, I can't think of anything that I would like added or altered or ...

Mmm. And do you find that people treat you differently now that you're older.

No not really.

Mmm.

Some people do. I think sometimes it is what comes with you and how you feel about yourself.

Perhaps ... Some people don't feel as good about themselves, but perhaps for some other reason.

Yeah. I, I, I hope it's that ...

Well you're someone who's travelled and has had a lot of experience of different ways of living and uh.

Yes, yes, yes.

Yeah, and have experienced all different sorts of people perhaps, you might have a stronger sense of ...

I know [inaudible] yes, one or two ladies down here who were in the forces

Mmm.

And they've got various injuries and, not injuries, they had injuries and now they're better and their leg won't work properly or something like that and they're a bit sort of, oh cranky for use of a better word, thing, because if it's you know it's, paining them or something like that. I don't have anything because I ... Oh God [laughing] you'll think I'm terrible. I don't have to [inaudible].

Yeah.

And you know I try to walk and ...

Yeah.

And I, I never think that I'm older; I mean I'm nuts you know [laughing].

[Tape stops.]

Interviewee 24

How long have you lived here?

All my life.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *Seventy-eight years, this month.*

Mmm, so what about here in this house? How long have you lived in this house?

Twenty-eight years. We built this one when we retired.

Oh my goodness me. And where did you live before you moved here?

On the same property but in the other, the house that [husband's name deleted]'s parents had built when they were married and that was, I think they were married about 1908 or 1909.

Goodness me.

But we're still on the same property. [Laughs.]

Mmm, mmm, I can't imagine what that would be like; and so what led you to build this house here then? You must have had some sort of thought about why you wanted to, to build this house.

Well we always thought this was a lovely spot and there was beautiful gum trees and things up here and uh I used to say to [husband's name deleted], don't let them chop those down so he nicknamed it [her first name deleted]'s Park. That was years ago, when we were young and because the other house was old and it cost a lot to keep repairing it and everything we decided that it'd be best when we retired that we build up here on the, on the bank and still sort of stay on the property.

Mmm, so a low maintenance house?

Yes that's what we thought.

And that it would be a good house to grow older in?

Yeah, this is what we thought and you might notice, we've got cement right round it, we joked when we built it 28 years ago. We said when we get older we'll be able to go around in our wheel chairs little thinking that the time would come that that's happened to [husband's name deleted].

Mmm.

We've got cement right round.

And is that all right? Can you take him in a wheel chair right round?

Yes, yes, it's an ideal place actually for a wheel chair. It's all level and ...

And the doorways are wide enough.

Yes, we've had no problems.

And what about room for turning around?

Well we manage. [Laughs.]

Mmm, yes because ...

The only thing I could see a problem, to get a stretcher out of our bedrooms you know and out the front door, it's a bit narrow; and looking back if I was building again I'd see to that a bit.

Because there are standards around all those sort of things, that cover things that probably you wouldn't think of.

Ah, ah we could get it done but we could've made it easier maybe.

Mmm, so there's you know, particular standards about the width of the doorways and the amount of area you need in a bathroom or toilet.

Yes.

To turn a wheelchair round.

Yes, no, well.

Or put it beside the toilet.

Yes, we, we manage with the toilet. We put a seat over the toilet and you know one of those special seats and wheel the wheelchair and like you can stand on the walker, just to get into the toilet. But, building again, I'd make those bigger.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Yeah but it's nice. Everything looks level.

It is. It's ideal really and even you know for maintenance to clean the windows and that, I don't have to climb up big high ladders and things.

Mmm.

We made the plan up so, [laughs] to suit our way of living.

Oh, and it does. It's very comfortable and, and yeah, it's not a typical plan is it.

No, no, no one else would have it because we made it up. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Mmm. Oh well, this area's particularly nice. Yeah. So tell me what you like about living here then.

Everything. My heart's here, my heart and soul.

Yeah.

I love, love living here. I've got wonderful neighbours, caring neighbours and ... each side of me ... I don't feel a bit nervous or frightened on my own because well if a strange car came up here late at night the neighbour down the road 'd be straight on the phone to see if I was all right. You know, they really are, living in the country's [pause] different.

Yes, I've found that from the few I've been talking to.

Yes.

Mmm, very different.

Yes, mmm. And they've all told me, each side of me and farther afield; if I need anyone day or night they're there. [Laughs.]

Mmm, and that's interesting that you say that because when I interview people in the suburbs, that, that doesn't come out spontaneously.

Oh no.

You've got to start ... You've got to ask them questions about their neighbours and it's not something that they're, they're you know, it's not something they really have much to say about.

No, no, we don't live in each other's pockets but we're there for each other.

Mmm, mmm yeah, well that's what a good neighbour is.

Yes but one of our neighbours in particular as we got older and we stopped driving in Hobart, I drive to [name of suburb deleted] and everything but ... I could drive to but I don't choose to.

Mmm.

And, one of our neighbours he'd drive us in our car any time anywhere, yes.

Yes, so is that the main sort of help that you have or do you have other sorts of help from your neighbours or?

Oh well they're all there to involve me and everything and wonderful church friends, and, and well church family really you'd say. We go to the community church down there and uh, uh a lot of input and output I suppose with you know caring people.

So your neighbours go to the same church?

Ah well no, only one lot go to the same church. No they're just neighbours that 've been here but you know, they live around the district and if I wanted anyone at the drop of a hat; I could ring anyone they'd come.

Yeah.

I'm lucky. I really am lucky.

Mmm. Yeah that is amazing.

And, and our family, our, our son and our daughter, daughter-in-law, they're very, very supportive.

Mmm. So you said they live nearby?

No, [name of son deleted] lives at [name of town deleted], which is really; I suppose only ten minutes away in the car.

Mmm.

And [name of daughter deleted] Jill lives uh, the other side of [name of town deleted], or in the town really.

Mmm, so I would call that nearby.

Yes.

When you say yeah, they're not close.

Yes, yes, no and they, they check on me every day. I couldn't get away with anything. [Laughs.]

[Laughs] Mmm.

And they visit Dad. [Name deleted] goes nearly every day. [Name deleted] works in the office of the [name deleted] at [name deleted] and, she generally calls into Dad at [name of nursing home deleted] on her way home every day.

So do you get support as well?

He had a stroke at, Christmas

Mmm.

And he's never had a day without visitors [laughs] from near and far.

Mmm. I mean it's not the, the usual picture of someone in a nursing home is it?

No it isn't and I feel so sorry for some of the old ones. They don't have anyone but we become their visitors too and you know we have a chuckle and a talk to them. That's the, the glory of living in the country that you sort of know so many people you know and have connections and things.

Oh connections. What a wonderful word.

Mmm.

And I like connections.

And I'm particularly fortunate because through my time as a district nurse I know people, I'm right for a cup of tea from Longley to Cockle Creek. You know and then I've got people all over, family that I know and that ...

Yeah.

I've got a wide range of contacts.

Mmm.

And it makes life interesting.

Mmm, yes it would, mmm.

Well, see [name deleted] put you in contact with me didn't she.

Yes.

Well, see I used to go to her grandmother-in-law. [Laughs.]

All the way up to [name of town deleted]?

[Conversation deleted.]

Mmm. So you would travel that far?

Oh yes, travelled as I say from right down south. There was only one...

So you said [town deleted] to?

To Longley.

Oh to Longley, yes, mmm.

I used to Longley then all the surrounding places.

Mmm.

Yes, up [name of town deleted] and [name of town deleted] and ...

So you know a lot more about housing issues for older people than I do, in this area, mmm.

Well but this is going back see, I've been retired a few years.

When did you retire?

Well let me think. I, I officially retired I think round about, I can't exactly remember ... might have been about '79 or '80 or something so, but, but then the doctor said I was like a snake going out to [inaudible] and any time someone went on holidays I'd go back and do a stint.

Oh yeah, so you'd relieve still?

Yeah.

Yes so you liked to doing it?

Oh I loved it.

Mmm, so is there, can you tell me about you know the issues that you're aware of for older people in rural areas? Because I was interested in that, in isolated, like the way government policies don't allow for the circumstances of older people living on farms; that sort of thing.

Yes well farming ...

They have a business that gets passed on.

Yeah, well there were some amazing old people what ... they lived alone. You know I've [inaudible] an old lady in her nineties, and this founds funny but it was ... it really amazed me. This poor old lady, she was an old spinster in her nineties and she battled in this little cottage on her own. I can see her now with her little black iron saucepans and her black kettle and everything and her knitting and her wireless and her bible.

Mmm.

And she, she lived there. She'd cared for her parents I think, until she was an old age and then she was on her own and she told me one year she killed 70 something rats. And I was horrified [laughing]; I couldn't kill, couldn't kill one.

[Laughs.]

But they weren't in the house. They were in the shed where she kept the, the feed for the chooks and things. But she did everything you know, carted the wood in and everything, poor old dear.

Right up into her nineties.

Yes.

And did she drive?

No, no. Oh no, that was too modern.

So how did she shop?

Well at [name of town deleted] at that time there was a shop just up, quite near there but she had a niece, a nurse, an unmarried niece who was getting on and a nephew that were very good to her and they'd sort of did that sort of thing. And in the country like that, they all knew each other and they'd all uh, whether you were related or not; and it's a bit like that down here, you know if you know anyone that needs their shopping doing well you take them and do it.

Yes and I have heard stories like that already from people I've interviewed in country areas.

Yes, yes.

Yes.

Yes that's the glory and especially [name of town deleted] is a wonderful place like that and [name of town deleted]'s good like that too.

So there's real community there.

Mmm.

But you can't get that moving in as an outsider because you don't, you know you don't have the, the mileage with the people there.

No.

You're not known and ...

Mmm.

I don't know. You have those connections don't you.

That's right. Mmm.

You can't just move in and have it happen.

Mmm.

Mmm. Because I've thought of that, wouldn't it be nice to go and live somewhere like that when you were older.

Well this is why I'd hate to leave here.

To leave here?

To leave here, yes.

Yes, yeah, because you'd never replace it.

No.

No.

And even if we sold the estate and I moved down the town, that'd be ideal for me because I've got lots of friends and relations and that if I could just walk to the shops and the library and the church, I'd be home and hosed.

Yeah.

Not that I'd have to go to my family or see them, but I don't want to be a burden to them.

Mmm.

But the thing is [name of nursing home deleted] will probably be building some independent living units soon and that'll be at [name of town deleted] and although I'd prefer to live at [name of town deleted], I'd do that rather than tie me family up.

Mmm.

They'd probably be horrified at me.

So you think, that would be because it would a purpose built unit because the other option would be to get a smaller easier to look after place in [name of town deleted]?

Yes but, but it's like gold to find somewhere level near the town.

Oh, and also you wouldn't be able to rely on services, if there was no one there. But whereas I suppose with [name of nursing home deleted], there'd be all the services on site?

Well actually [name of town deleted] would be better because everything's near.

Oh the doctor's.

The doctor's, the chemist, the church you know that I'm used to going to but that wouldn't worry me. I'm a people's person. I can fit in anywhere but really my heart's here in [name of town deleted]. I'd like to end my days here.

Mmm. And you mean here in these hills.

Oh God, that'd be ideal but I'd never tie my family up to be a burden if they had to look after the place for me.

Mmm.

And I've always told them that if the time comes that I have to go into a nursing home, never feel guilty because they'd never put me there, [laughs] if it wasn't necessary.

Mmm. Yeah well I suppose these days it's hard to get into one anyway, unless you're very unwell.

Oh yes. But I mean if it happened, well it happens.

Yeah, 'cos only a very small proportion of people do.

Yes and I never dreamt that [husband's name deleted] would have to into a place. I always thought I'd be able to look after him because he's been a wonderful man. His, his father died and there were seven in the family; he was the oldest and the youngest hadn't started school and there were still some at school and he sort of supported his mother and, and the family for years and years, in the depression days too.

Mmm.

You know and I, I ... he's been a good man and I'd always thought I'd like to, I'd always thought I'd be able to look after him at home

Mmm, mmm.

And it nearly broke my heart when I couldn't.

Mmm. Yeah, so that's why you started your family later. You got married later

Yes 37 he was when we were married.

And started your family later because he'd been looking after his family?

Oh yes, he'd been tied up for years but he loved his mother and, very much and like he's got one brother left and well his nieces and nephews and that all love him and visit him and everything.

And are they all local?

No, no they're scattered. [Laughs.] But we've all, it's always, it's always been a home where we've had lots and lots of visitors and it seems very peculiar just cooking for meself and, not having quite as many visitors, simply because I'm not here. [Laughs.]

Ah, because you're visiting [husband's name deleted] at [name of nursing home deleted].

Yes, mmm.

So it's a big change in lifestyle for you.

Oh exactly.

Mmm.

But I've got other interests. I'm in the [name of organisation deleted] and, and you know the, the [name of organisation deleted] and the auxiliaries and the church and that so ...

Mmm.

I've got plenty to interest me.

[Conversation deleted.]

Most older people that I've interviewed are church goers

Yes.

And I don't think you'd find that with other younger people.

No, no. It's different. When we were children just, just everyone went to church but now.

Mmm.

Lots of families don't. But I think after the war things changed. People got more money and they built shacks and got motorcars and went off doing other things on Sunday.

Yeah.

Mmm.

Some sort of idea of the good life. [Laughs.]

Yeah but I don't think it is the good life when you look at what's happened to a lot of their families.

Mmm. Looking at them, and really material things seem to be more important.

Yeah. We have, we haven't got much money but I think we've got riches that money won't buy with our family and friends and our faith. [Laughs.]

Yes, yeah well it's, when you talk about connectedness, I mean that's one way that you get connectedness, from church membership.

Yes, you do, mmm.

It's one of the main ways and also something spiritual in your life.

Yes.

That modern living seems to lack. Yes, Denmark it's one of the more... I don't know if you know of the concept of social capital?

No.

Yeah. Well it's been around since the early nineties. It was someone called Robert Putnam. I think he's a professor of something at Harvard but he did a study in Italy and they found that those communities, well a particular community in Italy [*sigh*] was very like and I think it's like that here. It was very supportive. You know if someone had a baby everyone would know and they'd you know

Oh yes.

And they come and see them and bring a present and goodness knows what. And it's not like that in the United States and then he wrote a book, it's a very famous book, called *Bowling Alone*, about the decline of social capital in the United States and he was looking for a measure of it. And the measure that he gets is membership of organisations and of course a church is one of those organisations.

Oh yeah.

Now the countries highest in the world on social capital are Scandinavian countries and they have the highest church membership.

Oh yes.

But it's quite different for them because, I don't know, I think we have this, I don't know, we put religion sort of up there; people have this idea that you know, that they've got to be really, really good to go to church and they can't just be ordinary people.

Oh no, but that's Christianity.

Yea, and yet in Denmark it's just so commonplace and part of ordinary life that people just accept it.

Yes.

People just go to church and they don't think of it as anything different or special.

No.

You don't have to feel you're holy or pure or anything.

No, no.

But yeah ... It's something about Christianity here that people feel you know that you've got to change who you are or how you are.

No I think God accepts you as you are.

Mmm, but ah ... It'd be interesting to know because I think Christianity in Denmark is a bit different from you know.

Mmm.

Perhaps what came from England.

Mmm.

I shouldn't be putting this on the tape but ... [Laughs.]

But I, I think a lot, a lot ... I should be careful when I say this. But a lot of so-called churches are [laughs] really not Christianity.

That's right and I've found that. Yes. I'm just going to tell you ... [Turns off tape.]

Uh, to me Christianity is not uh, uh ... I mean just 'cause there's a church and place and people go. I think Christianity's a personal thing between you and, you and the Lord. [Laughs.] You know.

Mmm. As is spirituality!

Yes that's what I mean. Yes, yes.

It's something only you feel and that no one else can really understand.

Yes, I mean just because I'm a Christian wouldn't make my children a Christian. It's got to be your own faith and the Lord is your saviour I think.

Mmm, Yeah so do your children go to church?

Yes, they do, grand children.

Mmm.

Great grand children [Laughs.]

And that's locally here?

Ah well no they're ... [name deleted] and [name deleted] are in [name of city deleted] now. Well not at [name of city deleted] but uh ...

So how many children do you have?

Ah, a son and a daughter.

Yeah

But [name deleted] is one of our granddaughters and she's married with the two little great grand children.

So they go to church?

Yes. And another, [name of daughter deleted]'s other married daughter lives in Launceston and her father-in-law's a Minister. And they're ... [name of granddaughter deleted] and her husband, [name deleted], they're very involved church activities.

Mmm.

He's a school teacher up at the ...

Mmm.

Mmm.

And people who are involved in a church community tend to be more community minded; they tend to give more.

Oh yes they do. Actually [name of granddaughter deleted] and [name deleted] have just had two street children or not children, I think they're teenagers. But apparently Roger taught these children at school at some stage and found them on drugs and rang Karen and asked him asked her could he take them home to try and get them back on their feet.

Mmm.

You know, so ...

That's taking a big risk.

It is really. It horrified me really because ...

Because you can do that our to the goodness of your heart and just get used and abused for it.

Yes. This is what worried me and [name of granddaughter deleted] just got, [name of granddaughter's husband deleted]'s a teacher and he's been teaching about six years, but [name of granddaughter deleted]'s just finishing at uni this year and you know, it's uh a big thing for her. She's out prac teaching some of the time.

Mmm.

Mmm.

So [pause] yeah, so this is your grand daughter?

Our granddaughter, yeah.

Yes, yeah, mmm. This is an, an interesting conversation but I'm picking up so many tangents that I can't capture them all. But it's so different. So what church is it?

Ah well they go to the [name deleted] Church.

Mmm.

And down here we go to the [name deleted] Church. It used to be originally the [name deleted] Church.

Mmm.

And they were getting light in numbers and the Church of [name deleted] was getting light in numbers, so they amalgamated.

Mmm.

And now every ... we've got people from nearly every denomination at the church down there now.

Mmm, and some young people are involved?

Oh yes, mmm.

[Conversation deleted.]

Oh we do here. We have men's breakfasts and lot's of things like that, and we [inaudible] people from all the churches. The priests come and all.

Mmm, mmm.

It was funny, when my husband was in hospital one day [laughs] he had a visit from the priest, simply because [husband's name deleted] knew his grandparents in the early days and he wanted to find out something you know and he went to visit him this day in hospital.

Mmm.

Then the Salvation Army Officer, [name deleted], a great friend of ours; she went to visit him.

Mmm.

[Name deleted], the, [name deleted] Chaplin, [inaudible] she went to visit him and then, what's the other one. And another one that was relieving at the church down here, and [name deleted], [name deleted]'s brother, said [laughing] [name of husband deleted]'s, [name of husband deleted]'s making sure he gets a foot in the door; he's had the lot (laughing), the lot in one day.

[Laughing.] Oh [sniff].

Mmm.

Yeah. It's amazing too that there's just that sense of sharing, lots of sharing, people know.

Yeah, yeah, oh yes. Our, at our church guild, we have, oh what was that, the 96th birthday at the [inaudible] and we asked the people from all the churches, every church in the [name of area deleted] come to that. We have that every year. You know the people mix well.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Yeah so community still happens here. [Laughs.]

Yes it does.

Yeah, anyway, so what do you think would influence you to move then? If you couldn't drive?

Well probably.

Yeah, because you must rely on driving to get around here?

Oh I do around here, mmm.

Mmm. And what sort of car have you got?

Toyota Corolla. It's pretty, pretty ancient. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

It still goes perfectly.

Yeah, yeah, so are you in a position to be able to replace that if, if it?

Not with a brand new one but I think mmm ...

Yeah, with something comparable? Sometimes it's better to get the older ones anyway.

Yes.

Yeah, it is a lot of money to get a new one but really old ones that are mechanically simpler can be easier to keep on the road.

Easier to maintain can't they.

So do you have a mechanic?

Do you mean in the family?

Someone who helps you; well it could be someone in the family.

Uh ...

A lot of people keep their cars going because they've got a friend, neighbour or child.

Well, not actually in the family but now say I couldn't start the car this morning, [name deleted], one of the neighbours, he'd come up and [laugh] 'ave it going in a trice. But like I keep it well serviced and the chap that services it is one of my best friend's sons. [Laughs.]

Huh.

Yeah, mmm. He calls me aunty but he's not my ... I'm not his aunty. Mmm.

Yeah.

But even the, the girl in the service station where I always get the petrol, after [husband's name deleted]'d been in hospital for a while she said who looks under the bonnet for you.

Heh.

Now [husband's name deleted]'s not there. I said no one [laughs]. I said I know how to start it and stop it

Mmm, mmm.

And keep going. And she whipped it up and, and every time I get petrol she checks the tyres and the oil [pause] just caring.

Mmm, so [husband's name deleted] always did look, keep the car running. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *Oh yeah.*

Yeah I suppose I'll be having to do those myself too because I've been on my own a couple of years.

Well the hardest thing I've done was to set a mousetrap and let the mouse off. [Laughs.] I'd never done that.

[Laughs.] Yeah, I think having cats is a good solution. I see you've got a cat.

Yes I've got Daisy and Onslow. [Laughs.]

What is it?

Daisy and Onslow.

Oh you've got two. [Laughs.]

Did you ever watch Hyacinth?

Oh yes. I loved that. Daisy and Onslow, they're wonderful.

Yes.

[Laughs.] Mmm, but your health is fine?

Yes, really it is with arthritis and I've just had blood pressure but that's well under control and it's perfect at the moment.

So how did you deal with that? With diet and exercise?

Oh well, exercise, I'm always on the go and yes, a lot of it was stress I think.

Are you on medication?

Yes but only mild. But I, I you know I'm pretty careful what I eat and, and I certainly get plenty of exercise.

Mmm, so what was the stress from?

Oh just you know 'cause [husband's name deleted] wasn't well and that sort of thing.

Mmm, you mean only since he had his stroke?

Yeah but see as he's aged you know he's had lots of ups and downs the last few years. Although he was, he was still working; you know he's been in hospital for a few things, for operations and whatnots.

Oh so you've had yeah ... I suppose at his age you would expect that but ...

And as he was ageing you know, interrupted sleep and that sort of thing but anyhow ... [Pause] but at the moment it's perfect. [Laughs.]

Mmm, so where's your arthritis?

Various places, but my hip and, and back, that's the worst.

Mmm.

At the moment.

As long as you don't have to get it in your shoulders you'll be right.

Oh don't worry I've heard that.

Oh you have. In the shoulders?

But it moves you know from place to place, with my ugly old fingers.

Oh dear.

But I don't know, there's plenty of people worse than me.

Mmm.

You know, as long as I can get around and be independent [inaudible] say I'll wear out not rust out. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] That's a good concept.

Mmm.

But do you find people treat you differently now you're older?

Oh not really. [Laughs.] Oh [pause] yeah, I suppose they uh, they're considerate.

Mmm.

Mmm. But the trouble is [laughs] I'm only eighteen in here. [Laughs.] I might be nearly eighty down here. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Yeah, mmm, yeah.

Mmm.

Yeah so it can be a surprise to some people. That's just what I've found in talking to people. Some find, but this is more people who live in the town.

Mmm.

Find that people don't treat them as well when they're older but in fact when I talk to people in country places, they find people treat them better when they're older.

Yes, I'd say they ...

Show more consideration and respect.

Mmm.

And more time for them and yeah.

They do really.

Mmm.

Now at church look, no end of the different families have said if you need any help mowing your lawn or need some wood carting in, just ring us up, but I don't do it because I haven't needed to. [Laughs.]

Mmm.

Yet tonight I'm going to a dinner. One of the ladies at church will be 40 and already somebody's rang up and said now we'll drive you so you haven't got to drive home into the house on your own at night.

Mmm, so you didn't even have to ask for the help.

No, no and that happens ... that, someone else 'll ring me up before the day's out too.

Because that's a hard thing for people and people don't ... When they're used to being independent, people don't like to ask for help do they?

No.

So perhaps even people here appreciate that that you're not going to ask them and so they'll offer.

That's right.

Mmm.

No, no I'm in a, a wonderful situation really, socially like that.

Mmm.

You know that that people care and it's just a good community. [Laughs.]

Mmm. It's a fantastic thing.

Mmm.

Yeah I think this is the main thing I've learnt from what I've been doing so far, that I'm looking for how do people stay connected. I mean I don't know how you recreate it in a town environment but uh, it's wonderful to see that it does still happen.

Mmm.

In, in small towns ...

Well it's how we grew up. Like I had an old aunty living opposite. Well I'd always look out if Aunt Luce's blind wasn't up at a certain time, I'd make an excuse to go up to see if she was all right. Things like that, all the neighbours, we've all cared about each other

Mmm.

And supported each other.

Mmm.

You, you know we've been lucky to grow up like that.

Mmm. Yeah. [Checks tape.] Is that still going? It must be on voice on record. Yeah it is. It means it turns off if no one talks. [Laughs])

Oh I used to have one of those.

Yes, it is, so it is about caring isn't it. Mmm, I guess people in town just end up being lost.

That's right. But I think what you put into life you get out of life too.

Mmm.

So, this isn't being recorded is it?

Yes, it is. It hasn't quite stopped.

Because I was going to ...

Do you want me to turn it off?

No, but it sounds like I'm boasting. No I don't mean to boast but for years, like I never went back to nursing till my children grew up because I think you know children need their mother. I think that's what's wrong with the world but it's not always the parents' fault. It's a necessity now.

Mmm.

But at the time the doctor that was here. He'd say if anybody got sick or, or died. It didn't matter what hour of the day or night. He'd say ring [name deleted] up and I'd go and do what was necessary but you know.

While your children were small?

Yes.

So you'd just do a bit of relief work?

No it wasn't work. It wasn't paid work.

Oh.

You know, he'd just say ring [name deleted] up and someone died and I'd go and lay them out.

Oh, like it was an informal thing, like a country town ...

Yes and I mean because I didn't think it was anything wonderful.

Mmm.

I didn't mean wonderful, unusual is the word I should say.

So it meant a lot to the people and now they ...

Yes and I've always thought well what's the use of having capabilities if you don't use them and I've never charged anyone in me life.

Mmm.

For doing things like that.

Mmm.

But it was funny when the kids were little. We had a buffet and in it was lots of nice cups and saucers.

Mmm.

[Laughs.] *And the kids used to call it Mum's laying out cupboard you know [laughs] because I never charged anyone and someone 'd always be sending me a cup and saucer.*

Oh!

[Laughs.] *Quite the joke really [laughs] with the kids ...*

[Laughs.] Mmm.

But no I think, if you live in a place, you might as well be useful. [Laughs.]

Mmm.

And, and like again you make beautiful friends all over the place. You get back what you give.

Mmm.

Of yourself, I mean, not money. Money's nothing to me.

Mmm.

It's handy to be miserable with but [laughs] but it doesn't bring, money doesn't [laugh] bring happiness.

Mmm. [Sniff.] *Yes and yet it is a priority for a lot of people these days, you're right.*

Yes.

Although home ownership does put pressure on people, on young couples

Oh yes.

Who both work if they want to own a home.

Mmm.

And if you don't own a home it's hard to have stability.

It is.

And how can you raise a family?

My heart aches for, for young ones now, especially lately, you know how prices have gone up and everything. You wonder how any young ones 'll ever afford homes.

Well it's no wonder they're putting off having children so long, mmm.

Mmm. Which is a shame. They're missing out really.

Mmm, yeah, my daughter feels that. She's got a real heartache about it but both she and my son worked in Sydney, so they could get work.

Yes.

And they've both bought their own place

Mmm.

But then [pause] they've got to deal with a big mortgage.

This is true yeah.

And pay the HECS.

And, and it was different when we grew up. The mothers, they're run off their legs carting children to all these school doos now that are really necessary. You know it's almost necessary to have two cars.

Life's so complicated now. Yes I don't know why that is but it was like that in Denmark too. But the children have so many interests and activities that they have to go to all the time. That's what people were saying, you know older people who liked having children in the

community. They were saying the problem is the children are never here. They've got horse riding and ballet and you know soccer.

Yes.

And music lessons.

That's true.

And I did that with my kids. I was just like, when I was working, because I worked from when my youngest was seven or eight, I was just flat out driving everywhere. When I wasn't at work I was driving people.

Mmm.

I was rushing home to pick them up to take them to ballet or music or you know, on Saturday it was football or hockey and underwater hockey.

And it stresses.

Laughs.

And it stresses not only the mothers but the kids too I think. I don't think the kids have time enough now to really just go and, and listen to the silence. You no listen to the birds twittering.

Or have their own thoughts.

Mmm.

But like, it's become a kind of a race. Perhaps it's a bit like the US, where the aim is to make them the most successful person you can so you try to give them all the advantages you can ...

But often they rebel at that, don't they.

Mmm.

It's if it's ...

If it's forced on them, yeah.

It's easy to want the best for your children but I don't believe in pushing them to ...

Well I didn't push any of mine.

That's good.

They all chose to do music.

Mmm.

And they still, they all became musicians; none of them are professional musicians but they're all very committed to being musicians.

That's good that, and they'll always make friends.

They have made, especially my eldest, my son. He has made so many good friends through playing music with people.

Mmm, yes I've always maintained that.

Mmm.

That they can do that.

In fact some of the older people I know that I've interviewed in town, who ... That's one way they've stayed connected, by being involved in musical groups.

Yes. I'm one. There's a group of us down here. It's not a named group or anything but it's just a few of us. [Name deleted] sings nicely and uh there's another girl, [name deleted] that sings. And I go and tell funny stories and poems and whatnot [laughs] and, oh another one plays the violin. And we go around some of the old people's homes and entertain them sometimes.

Mmm. I think they'd love that. [Laughs.]

I'm always looking for funny stories and poems.

Yeah, so what are the older people's homes besides [name of nursing home deleted]?

Oh we've been over to [name of retirement village] and down to, I think it was [name of town deleted]. That was in a hall. It wasn't actually a home, but an elderly citizens group and we've been over to the Eastern Shore and to Murray Street in Hobart. Yeah.

Oh to the Fifty and Better?

No it wasn't that. No it was at the chapel there. But it wasn't all Murray Street people. It was an elderly citizens.

So that chapel that's just up between Bathurst and Melville.

Yes.

Yeah I know that one.

Mmm, mmm, but it just wasn't all the people who went there. It was an elderly citizens.

So did you say you sing?

No, no.

What do you do?

I tell jokes and funny stories, poems.

Oh. Poems. So are you related or were you related to [name deleted]?

No. [Laughs.] I've written a few.

There's a lot of [name deleted]s around. Ah so, we've got another [name deleted] poet.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *Oh no, mine are pretty cranky.*

[Laughs]) Ah, oh well you'll have to show me some now that I know about it.

[Laughs.] *I'm not on the tape still am I?*

[Checks tape.] Well it still seems to be going. Humour is ... It's nearly finished. Humour is the most amazing thing.

It is.

[Turns tape off.]

Well I think they're good. Now have you been to the [name of retirement village deleted]?

Yes! [Identifying comment deleted.]

Oh yes, well actually I've just had someone staying with me this week who's husband's got Alzheimers. They plan to go in there and they. [Name deleted]'s there...

Who's [name deleted]?

[Name deleted]. *She's on the ... Has a lot to do with it and she lives in the, [name of retirement village deleted] in one of the units and her husband unfortunately after they'd planned to go in there*

got Alzheimers. But he's got more than Alzheimers. They think most of it might 've been from a stroke he'd had.

Mmm.

And she's very happy. Well she's unhappy because of what's happened to him, her husband but she thinks it's marvellous and if it wasn't for leaving [name of town deleted], when they were building them [husband's name deleted] and I thought they were a good idea, and would we sell up and you know ... Then we though no, we're part of [name of town deleted]. We, we love it here and we've always been here so we didn't go but I think they are a good thing, those units.

Well, people, once it's harder to get around, you've still got some possibility of community life there.

Yes, mmm, mmm.

Just outside your door.

And I think [name of nursing home deleted] might even be thinking eventually of building some at [name of town deleted]. Well that would be actually better than at [name of town deleted] in one sense because there's no shops and I doubt there's a library at [name of town deleted]. You could always get a taxi and pop up because if you wasn't running a car then it would probably end up cheaper than running a car.

Yes, yes, definitely.

Mmm, but you know that'd be all right and because I know so many people being around the [name of area deleted] 'd do me, preferably than [name of retirement village deleted] although I know a lot of people around the [name of area deleted] because I don't know if you've ever heard of it, but K.Y.B; well that's Know Your Bible and that's [inaudible] ... It's all over Australia. All over the world really and it's just women from all denominations do bible studies. And then there's Christian Women Communicating Internationally. It's called C.W.C.I.

Oh yeah well, [name deleted].

Yes I know [name deleted].

She was one of the women in the group.

Oh yes, well I know, I know [name deleted] and I've only met her through these functions.

Mmm.

So I know lots of women around the [name of area deleted] that if I, if we were to go up to [name of retirement village deleted], we already know lots of people there.

Mmm.

But I'm lucky.

Yes

I know people all over Tasmania really, through church things and that.

Mmm.

I've got a wide range of contacts.

Yea, so often people would move into a retirement village and not know anyone.

Yes, mmm. But I think it's up to you. You soon get to know people if you, if you've got the hand of friendship and that's all. Get involved.

Yeah.

Mmm.

Well in Denmark people said to me, to live in cohousing you need to be open.

Mmm.

And letting people in and being flexible and tolerant.

Yes.

Actively participating in the community.

Mmm. I was going to do a computer course and I'd booked to go to the on-line and learn it and just went before [husband's name deleted] had a stroke so that's been put on hold.

So you still might?

Oh yes, I could.

Well I couldn't 've done without access to the Internet. I forget how long I've had it at work, probably three or four years.

Mmm.

And, what ... I don't think we [turns off tape].

Two or three houses down there's a green roofed house down there, and the dear old lady there, she's 98.

Oh.

Well you'd almost say she lives alone because her son's Downs' Syndrome. He's in the, fifties but she's amazing.

Does she look after him?

Yes and she gardens and cooks. She does get Home Help but she's got, a lot of family in the area you know and that. They all go into Mum and she's got a daughter-in-law that calls in on her way home from teaching every day and sees her and that. But, but she's marvellous.

Mmm, 98.

Ninety-eight. And only that she's so deaf. She played golf until she was in her eighties.

Heh, yeah some people are just fantastic.

The way we grow them here, most people go into there, have gone into their nineties up this way.

Laughs. Yeah it does seem to happen a lot in country areas.

Mmm.

Someone who lives out near New Norfolk, on a farm, an old man who never, hasn't been into town for 70 years I think. You know said that one of the secrets was the peace. He didn't want to come into town because it was too busy and too noisy. I should get that out of the paper and keep it. It was only recently.

This is, this one beautiful thing about here, it's the peace. [Husband's name deleted] used to say to me nearly every day, you know. It's so beautiful and peaceful.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Yes it was lovely driving up here.

Yes it's beautiful. It's not much of a day to see it today but ...

It started out all right.

And you know it varies different times of the year and everything but the ... And there's neighbours close although it's like you're all on your own up here. I could do a strip in the nude and no one 'd see me. [Laughs.]

Yeah. That is true, up here.

Oh yeah.

[Turns tape of.]

And they're ah ... People are pretty happy in there. I know someone with a beautiful home who sold it after his wife died and went into it and thinks it's ideal. He can go away when he wants to and know everything's safe and if he's not well he can arrange to have meals there.

Mmm.

And all that sort of thing.

So where are the meals provided from?

From the Multi-Purpose Centre. See that's ...

The [name of town deleted] Multi-Purpose Centre, so are the units?

Yes but you go ...

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 25

How long have you lived here?

Ah well I sold my farm ... November '71, and I bought this almost immediately because it was, the sale had been for quite a while, and because it had quite a bit of land to it I wanted it because [cough] I came in here with a cow and a couple of calves at the time and so I, I moved in here on the 21st of November 1971. So I've been here what, 30 years?

Mmm, 32 is it?

I've been here as long as I was...

Thirty-one.

Out home.

It'll be 32 in ... I'll put that down. So you were out at the farm for about 30 years as well?

Then, and now.

Mmm.

I ran it. My father died when I was 22 and, it was about 1955, and mother and I carried on until she died. That was the third of July [inaudible] '71, and ...

Oh so you left after your mother died?

Yeah.

Mmm. So you lived there and raised your family there?

I haven't any family.

Oh.

I, I call him my grandson, but I ...

Mmm.

He's, belongs to ... I met a dear friend in the process of selling the farm ...

Mmm.

And, we would have married only he wouldn't because he was divorced and I'm a Catholic

Right.

And he wouldn't do that.

Mmm.

But we shared this house for about 10 years until he died of cancer [starting to cry] ...

Oh, mmm [softly]. And that's his son, so it is your grandson.

That's right.

It's his, it's his grandson.

Yes.

Yes [pause] oh.

[Coughs.] *Otherwise I wouldn't have had any family.*

Mmm [softly].

I've got lots of cousins. I went to a family reunion last week. My mother's youngest aunt died. She was 99.

Mmm. Oh, that's right, yes, you told me that on the phone.

Mmm.

Mmm.

On Tuesday; [pause] so we had a big reunion breakf ... afternoon tea.

Mmm, so are many of your relatives still living around here?

I'm the only ... Well [pause] no only [step grandchild's name deleted] and [inaudible]. No, none of them live ... Oh there is a couple of cousins ...

So these are also the children of your partner who died?

Grandchildren.

Grandchildren, mmm.

[Step granddaughter's name deleted] *lives in town and is just, become engaged and* [other step granddaughter's name deleted] *lives at* [name deleted] *but she's going to work. She's got a apprenticeship at a racing stud in Victoria.*

Goodness me.

They always liked to play horses, well [name of step granddaughter deleted] *anyway.*

[At this point she got up to show me some photos on the mantelpiece and proceeded to show me around the house. The tape was left on.]

[Coming back into earshot.] *In the big sun and the big lounge room.*

Mmm.

The one you came into.

Mmm.

[Coughs.] *It used to belong ... I bought it off Mrs* [name deleted] *. They had the bakery here.*

And you said it used to belong to your grandfather?

Mmm, mmm.

Yeah, so it must be quite an old house.

The front part, the front part, the two front rooms, are the two original rooms but the rest of it's been pulled about and rebuilt.

Mmm.

Yeah.

So, do you know your neighbours?

Well I've got a young couple at ...

Apart from your grandson, of course.

Next door.

Mmm.

[Name deleted] and I, I can't think now what his name is. They've got one little toddler. She's just recently had another baby. They live on that side. And on this side I've got two people who've just come over here from New South Wales.

Mmm.

The lady is 88. Gets about with a walking frame, and her friend, I can't remember what his sur...
Christian name is ...

Mmm.

But she's the mother of the lady that owns the corner shop.

Oh!

That's how they're over here.

The corner shop.

Yeah.

Not the bakery, the corner shop.

The corner shop, yeah.

So she's come to be nearer her daughter?

That's right, yeah. And I was in there yesterday just to say hullo to them. I haven't got a hanky.
Excuse me while I go and get a hanky.

Mmm, mmm. I'll just turn this off for a sec.

[Turns tape back on.]

So you were telling me about your neighbours on this side.

Yes, I don't know them well, that well, but I think he's, he's a nice old chap. They both are but... Then the people over the road, [name deleted], [name deleted] and his wife, he's a retired, oh what do you call it, dental mechanic.

Oh.

And uh they're a nice couple. All, we're all in the Probus Club together.

Mmm.

And..

So what is that? Is that a public speaking club?

Well yes. It is a professional retired people's club sort of thing and so I come into that because I'm a retired farmer. [Laughs.]

Mmm.

This is a photo of the farm, down home.

Mmm.

[Noises of getting up to get it out of a cupboard.]

That's my little lad.

Ah, yes he looks quite a lot like his father.

[Child's name deleted.]

[Referring to photo of boy with a pony.] Mmm. That's funny. A real walking toy is it?

Well it's not a toy. It's a real one.

I know it's a real thing, yes.

[Laughs.]

I think children often prefer real things.

That was taken up at his uncle's home, not that it was up the road and ... We wanted to show it to him because he was always interested in things like that. So we just snapped him with it. I might go and get the ...

[Turns tape off.]

So you feel safe living here?

Yes. And ...

My little dog sleeps inside and anything that comes up the side of the house, she barks.

Mmm.

Mind you I don't think she'd be a very good watchdog but ...

Mmm. Too friendly?

Yeah. Although I think if there was anybody inclined to be a bit aggressive I think she would be a better guard dog.

Mmm. So if you needed to go to anybody for help around here, like something happened, whatever it was you know; are there people you could go to, nearby? I don't know.

Oh I think so, yeah.

Mmm. So has that ever happened where you needed to ask your neighbours for help?

Yeah. I don't think I'd have to go far.

Well you must know ... I mean not just your neighbours, when I ask you about your neighbours, because you've lived all your life here and worked all your life here; you must know so many people here. And you've been so involved in the community.

Well there's a lot of new people here but, people that live nearby here, I know them.

Mmm.

Yeah, we're not far from the hospital either.

Yeah I haven't seen the hospital. I don't know where it is. And do you ever need to use the hospital or?

I go to the doctor. I have been, I have, I have been in this hospital; and I've been in the old hospital before that. They've sold it.

Mmm.

Spent a week in there too. [Laughing.] But I haven't been in this one I don't think.

Mmm.

If I have, then only for a night, yeah.

Mmm, so you're not planning to move, to move from here then. You, seems like you're going to stay.

Well I mean I don't have any services. I don't have any meals. See we have Meals-on-Wheels here and we have district sisters, all that sort of thing. I don't have anything of that.

Mmm.

And, I like to cook. In fact I'm too fond of me food not to cook.

Mmm, mmm. Yeah, I don't even know how old you are.

I'll be seventy-one on Boxing Day.

Oh, I'll put this down here. Boxing Day, so your 70 now, so 26th of the 12th '03. I'll put that in now. Mmm, yeah so it's very sad that you, your friend died. That must have been 20 years ago now that, that happened.

Mmm, mmm.

Yeah.

Yes, it took me a long time to get over it.

And you don't have any photos of him?

Ah.

That's not him is it?

No. I do have photos of him but not sure that I can find him now.

Mmm, yeah, so you gave a lot of your life to your family too in staying with your mother and keeping the farm going after your father died.

Oh well, wasn't anything else we could. I mean it was our livelihood.

Mmm.

That's the reason I sold it, because farming was at, at a low ebb then. Sheep weren't worth much and when my mother was alive I could go and work on the farm you know and she'd be there if I had a, if something had happened but it wasn't safe for me to work there alone because it was too isolated.

Mmm.

And, so that's why I sold it.

Mmm. Yeah so you were just in your very early forties when you sold it. Is that right? I think.

I wasn't quite 40, I don't think.

Oh right. Mmm.

No I wouldn't have been because I was born in 1932.

Mmm. And what did your mother die suddenly or was that?

Yes she did. She always worried that she, because she had arthritis very badly and she used to walk with two sticks or a stick anyway.

Mmm.

And she used to worry that she'd be too bad and I wouldn't be able to look after her. I did get a carer's allowance for looking after her for the last two years. And, I'll put another piece of wood in; it's got cold again. [Puts wood in fire.] And I, but to farm there alone wasn't safe you know because we only ever came into [name of town deleted] once or twice a week and I mean I could've had a fall or something and be just lying there, so it wasn't safe.

Mmm.

So, that's why I moved.

Mmm, so the last couple of years your mother was less mobile than she had been and there were things you needed to do to help her?

Yeah.

Yeah. But it was still ... having her there meant that someone knew

Yeah. If you were all right?

Well she was able to use the phone.

Mmm.

And if I didn't come home, well she was there to alert somebody. But she died in the chair sitting by the fire.

And how old was she?

Well, I'm not sure because she would never let me know how old she was.

Mmm.

But she was 28 when she was married and that was, that was in '28.

Oh.

No, no. Dad was 28. She always said she was 12 years older than he was.

Oh.

So that would make her nearly 40.

Oh so that's, so she was only able to have one child because she, she was ...

Well she did have another baby but it ah, was born oh three or four years before I turned up, but she was expecting it and she was in here, in [name of town deleted] here with some friends and this dog went for her and bit her and killed the baby.

Oh, bit her on the stomach.

Mmm.

Oh so the pregnancy was fairly advanced then?

Must have been.

Dear what a terrible thing.

And uh, she nearly lost her life too.

Mmm.

She was in hospital in Hobart for a long time.

Mmm.

And, but anyway I turned up. I only just made it too. [Laughs.] I was four pounds when I was born.

Oh.

And I went down to three and a half, but, anyway I made it.

Well when you were little you certainly looked very robust.

Yeah.

When you were the little girl with the sheep.

Yeah.

Well you must've been very strong to work, you know, to have done that hard farming work.

Yeah, yeah, yes.

And then the market gardening, that would have been difficult work too I suppose.

Ah yes. I had a rotary hoe to use for that but [coughs] we used to grow carrots and peas and French and butter beans

Mmm.

And uh, tomatoes

So that's how you supported yourself?

And uh, sweet corn.

You supported yourself that way?

Oh half and half yeah, with a bit of other help that I had.

Mmm. So you weren't on government benefits at that time?

A little while I was because I used to work at [name deleted]'s, like the season, depending on what the apple crop was like.

Mmm.

And then I'd get perhaps benefits for three or four months and then the garden would come on.

Mmm.

And then I used to go fruit picking up at a friend's place, picking black currants. That was fun.

Mmm.

[Coughs.] *I'd take four children up from here.*

Which children?

Ah, people round the place.

Yeah, like they'd just come up for fruit picking?

Yeah.

Yeah.

Drove right up the top of [name deleted] Road, I used to take them.

You'd drive them up. So like you mean like teenagers or?

Oh yes, they'd be sort of anything from twelve upwards I suppose.

Mmm and they'd get a bit of pocket money?

Yes.

Mmm.

It was in the Christmas holidays.

And your friend, what was his name?

[Name deleted.]

[Name deleted.]. So, and he died of cancer?

Mmm [very sadly].

Yeah and so you cared for him while he was ill? Was he unwell, you know, for long or?

Well he gradually got worse.

Mmm.

He took ill and I, we had a very good doctor at the time and he came up and saw him and he broke the news to us that that's what was wrong.

Mmm.

And he treated him for a while then he went into the Royal for three weeks and he came home here for three weeks.

Mmm.

And he died then in the little old hospital that we had down here.

Mmm. So, it must have been a fairly aggressive form of cancer if it was only a short time after he was diagnosed.

Ah yes. It was what men get when they were ...

Prostate.

Prostate cancer. It went all through him.

Mmm.

Wretched thing.

Mmm.

It's a real killer that and [inaudible], they say they're getting cures for it but I'll believe it when I see it.

And they also seem to be doing things about prevention as well as cures; also earlier detection now. They're more aware of it.

Mmm. It's a dreadful thing.

Well it must have been a shock.

Oh it was. The sisters at the hospital, they used to say: are you sleeping all right? And I'd say [crying] well I work too hard not too.

So you were still working in the market garden then?

Mmm.

Mmm. [Pause.] And were his children here, then or?

[Step daughter's name deleted], [step daughter's name deleted] *was on [name deleted] Island at the time because she and her husband were at the lighthouse there.*

Mmm.

But she came home with the little ones. [Step grandson's name deleted] was only the little boy.

This is [step grandson's name deleted]. So is [he] the eldest?

Yes, he's nearly 30 and [step granddaughter's name deleted] is 22 now and [step granddaughter's name deleted]'s eighteen.

So there's a big difference.

Yeah.

Mmm. So [clears throat] can you think of ways that you'd like to improve your housing?

Oh well I have had it mightn't look it but I have had it done up quite a lot on what it was when I got it. I had it all painted and it probably wants doing again now [laughs] but it had been painted both inside and out and er, I had the lounge room done up and painted. I mean when I bought it the ... the fireplace wall was purple.

Oh! Mmm.

And the rest of it was white. So I got rid of that very smartly.

Mmm.

So I did it myself. I'd painted it cream and it's still the same. Last time I painted it someone else did it though.

Mmm. But do you think that there's anything that'd make it like you know, I suppose you have a bit of arthritis.

No.

You've got something with your back then?

Well I thought I'd had a stroke but they said I hadn't.

Yeah.

But no my back's all right.

Mmm.

I used to do a lot of gardening but yesterday I'm very pleased with myself. I got out and did quite a bit of weeding which I hadn't been able to do for a while. And yes, I was very pleased with that.

Because I've interviewed some other people who worked in the apple industry who've done damage to their backs, mainly from lifting the cartons of apples. But it depends on the work you do.

Look my father when I was growing up, because I worked on the farm ever since I was a little girl.

Mmm.

And he taught me. We used to grow a lot of tomatoes, four or five thousand, field tomatoes, we grew and he taught me how to lift things. Like to lift a case of potatoes you know,

Mmm.

You don't bend it you know you sort of lift it from ...

Use your legs?

Use your knees, not your back.

Mmm.

Yeah and I think that saved me a lot really.

Yeah. So you're still able to garden?

Yeah, little bit, mmm. No I was very pleased with myself yesterday and this morning I done me washing and brought it in.

Mmm.

Would you like to have a look around the place a bit?

Yeah.

[Tape turned off. End of recorded interview. This was followed by visit to the farm where she used to live and work; and further un-taped conversation about the history of where she had lived.]

Interviewee 26

How long have you lived here?

Thirty-two years.

And can you tell me about where you lived before you moved here?

I lived in flats over in [name of suburb deleted]. I lived in a shack, behind my mother-in-law's house and that was terrible. It had no water, no nothink.

Mmm.

Everyone was so Polish and it was just horrible and I had two small children. And it took me a couple of years to get a Housing Department house.

So then you, so you stayed in this Housing Department house where this is. So can you tell me a bit more about what led you to move to this house then?

Well we had our names down for two years.

Mmm.

And my husband wouldn't go up to the Eastern shore. And then I contacted a Member of Parliament, Eric Barnard, and he picked out this house for me and it was just what I wanted. It had a good view and handy to the shops and split level and ...

Oh it's split-level is it?

Yeah. So I was quite happy with this house.

Mmm. Yeah because you've got a nice outlook.

Yeah but that was the only way I got the house you know. They just wouldn't take any notice of the doctor's certificates or anything like that.

Mmm.

Didn't matter how many certificates and that you had.

You just had to wait your turn in those days.

Oh yes you had to wait your turn but I mean the turn never seemed to come. I mean there wasn't that many people on the thing in those days and ... Now that's, nowadays you've got emergency housing. Well really I should've had emergency housing but it was only Eric Barnard and the Parliament that time, who stepped forward and pushed me up to the top of the queue, yeah.

Mmm.

And then he even came out afterwards and said how do you like your house and I said it's lovely.

Huh

I mean I appreciate getting this house and I looked after it but yet other people that just wreck the houses and get another one and another one.

Mmm, mmm, so how long ago did you buy it?

Oh about 20 years ago when my father died.

And you had some money.

Yeah.

And you were just able to pay cash for it?

Yes.

Mmm.

Which was handy but now I'm sorry because you know I've got to find money for the fences and money to fix this and money to fix that and I'm always on the credit card and paying this off.

Mmm.

So it would have been better off just paying rent.

Yeah.

But I mean you don't know. I mean I was married and I didn't realise things were going to turn terrible and, mmm ...

Mmm, so from when your husband died things became difficult?

Oh my husband was a drunk and a ... I tried to divorce him after 20 years of marriage and all hell broke loose and he was a horrible person and you know, good riddance to him but he jumped off the Tasmanian bridge.

Oh.

And I know ... I had to bring up two kids on my own.

Mmm, and how old were you when that happened?

Thirty-nine. And of course I did courses but never ever got a job. No one would ever, you know now I'm 59 [laughs] so not much chance of getting a job now.

Mmm. And so what, you've said a little bit about it, but so what do you like about living here?

Well it's handy to the shopping centres. It's handy to everything. We have a doorstopper bus. You know like you pick the bus up in [name of suburb deleted] and he drops you at your door with your groceries.

Mmm.

And there's a letterbox on the corner. I'm sort of the secretary of a few organisations so I can type up my things and just stick them in the letterbox and ...

Mmm.

And just there, there's a park up [name deleted] Street. When the kids were young they could get on their bikes and go up to the park.

Mmm, so you don't drive?

No never learnt to drive. That's the only bugbear with the public transport. There's none at night-time. We used to have good public transport till four years ago but Jim decided he'd cancel all these bus services.

So what do you do when you need to go out at night?

Don't go out at night. I just stay home.

And you don't have friends that'll pick you up?

No. Nobody'll ever. I have a Polish friend, she'll say she'll take me half way up [name deleted] Street but my son says that's no good because my son works at night. He doesn't live with me but I mean he often gives me a lift somewhere and he said no you might as well stay home because you're not walking out in the pouring rain or...

Or the dark. So you get lifts from your son sometimes.

Yes.

And you've got two sons?

Yes

Mmm.

But I had trouble with the other one; he doesn't drink, he gambles. So I had terrible ...

So where's he? Is he here?

He's in Hobart, yeah.

Well it must be painful to see that happening to your son.

Well he gambled and then he, he assaulted me because he wanted me to sign the house over to him and I ended up in intensive care and everybody took my son's side.

He assaulted you?

Nearly killed me, kicked me and punched me and. My eldest son went for a holiday, soon as he drove out the driveway, this is about five years ago the other younger son got me on the ground in the kitchen and kicked me and punched me and kicked me and punched me. Wanted me to sign the house over to him.

Mmm.

Well had I signed the house over to him he'd 've only gambled that away.

Yeah.

Anyway my eldest son as soon as he got up there. He went to his friend's place then he said oh I forgot my boots, my walking boots. I'll go up in the mountains walking. And he came back unexpectedly

Mmm.

And found me and took me to the doctor's and I ended up in intensive care. And on sheer principle I took him to court and ...

Mmm.

Everybody said oh what a terrible person, terrible person and I said well someone's had to teach that little bastard a lesson.

And did he get convicted of anything?

Ohh! You know I went to court 15 times.

Yes.

On an assault charge with him.

Yeah.

I never heard of that happening ever before.

Mmm, mmm.

Well I mean a simple assault charge should have been over and done with on that day.

Yeah.

And when I went to the lawyer; you can only go to the lawyer free for once.

Yes.

Because I own this house I couldn't get legal aid

Oh, mmm.

I mean you're sort of asset rich and cash poor.

So did he get charged in the end?

Oh yes he got charged but they kept losing the papers and losing the papers and all he got was he told these porky pies about my husband committing suicide and all this rubbish. It had nothing with what really happened.

Mmm.

They twisted things around.

Mmm.

And he was able to pay the top lawyer and I couldn't afford a lawyer.

Oh because he didn't have a house?

Well he earned ... he worked.

Oh.

He worked and so he paid ...

Even though he had a gambling problem he still had money?

Well, some days he wins you know. You know the case just went on; it went from Magistrate's Court to the Supreme Court. I thought I was on a, in a murder trial the way it just dragged on for years and oh.

And then what, he just got something like a bond or a suspended sentence?

Oh yeah, oh yeah. Everyone just felt sorry for poor little fella. He'd been orphaned since he was thirteen when his husband, when his father committed suicide and his mother was the biggest bitch that ever walked this earth. Everybody took his side. The magistrates took his side and said I was a stupid cow for taking him to court.

Well he must have been a very persuasive person, your son.

He is, like his father.

Yeah.

Very charming. Hullo, yes sir, no sir. Blonde hair, blue eyes, beautiful looking kid.

Mmm.

Ohh!

Dearie me.

Of course I always get upset about things and he's always calm and cunning, you know.

Mmm.

Dear, dear. So you wouldn't really want to see him then?

Never ever again and people can say oh you know, poor [name deleted] he's got no father and now you've taken him to court. I said well I brought that kid up and when he was thirteen put him through private schools.

Mmm.

You know I could have spent my father's money on holidays and got myself a boyfriend.

What school did they go to?

[Name of school deleted]. *This is what you get with them.*

Mmm, oh it's not easy and I think when they're adolescents.

Yeah.

You know it's good to have a father around to, because they can become quite difficult to discipline.

Yeah and he was a drunk and a gambler and ... I hit the jackpot there.

Mmm, and their actual father well he probably wouldn't have been a good person to have around anyway.

Well I put up with him for 18 years and I couldn't put up with him one more day. I just decided this was it. I said I'm not putting up with that creep one more day.

And so you finished it with him?

Well I chucked him out of the house and tried to get divorced and he kept coming backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards and the police kept taking his side. Then in the end finally the police found him and locked him up for the night. And ah, you know these restraining orders are just a complete waste of time.

So he was violent too?

Mmm, yeah.

So his, your son learned that from his father did he?

Well you think he'd appreciate what I did for him, keeping a roof over his head and that, but no.

Mmm, so what do you like about living here?

Well it's handy to everything and we've got a picture theatre down the street.

Oh yeah.

Yeah.

And you go to the pictures?

Yes, I like going to the pictures. And you know we've got the Sunday Markets. You know they always used to have the Sunday Markets at [name deleted] but now they're at [name deleted] so.

It's too far to go is it?

Well in the summertime it's all right.

Mmm, so how do you get there?

I walk down there then there's [name of suburb deleted] ... there's a bus goes through [name deleted] about two o'clock, so I can catch that bus back.

Mmm, so how far is it to walk down to [name of suburb deleted]?

Oh about a mile.

Mmm, so is that what, does that take you about half an hour?

Yeah, half an hour.

What about the [name of suburb deleted] shops, how long does it take to walk down there?

Well it's the same area.

About the same?

Yes.

Oh.

And see I mean now, I mean when I first lived here we didn't have nothing, we had to go to town, but here we've got the Service Tasmania for people to pay their licences or anything like that

Mmm.

So we really have everything out in [name of suburb deleted].

Mmm.

Big shopping centres and ...

And so you don't need to go to town?

No but I do but I mean, no.

And you feel safe here?

No, not lately. These lunatics next door. I've rung the police up to them so many times and I mean these people don't even live there. They're visitors and she has this, this woman and this daughter in this place and there's all these bodgie fellas I mean and last night, there's bottles when I got up this morning, in my yard.

Mmm.

So they've been walking around in my yard, God knows.

Yeah, throwing bottles over the fence maybe, mmm.

I used to feel safe but now I don't because they've had this drug, needle exchange program next to the [name deleted].

Yes.

And, they could, you know a woman was just you know probably thinking about paying her bills, because sometimes you walk along the street and you're not even thinking about running into something and this woman said to her last year, what are you bloody looking at and wham bang, she ended up didn't know this lady was just walking along the street outside [name deleted].

Yeah.

And ended up stabbed, critically injured in hospital.

Mmm.

And you know [name deleted] says oh there's not many of those cases about.

Mmm.

And we've had a few bag snatches.

Mmm.

And I think it's to do with this nee ... Sure there should be a needle exchange program, but not in the middle of [name of suburb deleted].

Yeah where a whole lot of other people are going too, mmm.

Yeah, next to the Post Office; next to Centrelink for goodness sake; I mean all sorts of people go to Centrelink, not unemployed people but old people going on pensions, so I mean you should feel safe in that area.

Mmm, yeah.

See that should be down near [name deleted] sort of thing, a bit out of the shopping area.

Yeah, and probably, I don't know, those people might not be feeling too happy about being identified anyway, to even be going to the needle exchange. Mmm and you find this place is ... It looks like it is pretty easy to heat. Is it well insulated?

Yes, yes, I've got insulation. If I can use the new heater, the oil heater works but today I can't get the damn thing to go and I rang [name of son deleted] up and he's going to come and have a look at it and see if me oil's ... I just filled it up on Monday so ...

Mmm, so that must be quite expensive, the oil heater?

It's a \$100 every couple of months.

Oh that's not too bad, mmm.

No. [Coughs.] He'll get up on the ladder and see if somebody here has ... Well you just don't know if someone has knicked it.

Knicked the oil? Mmm.

Well you wouldn't believe it.

Mmm.

You wouldn't know what these people do.

This is just diesel? What sort of oil is it?

Diesel oil.

Oh just diesel oil.

But I mean they probably sell it. Who knows?

Yeah. Mmm.

There's a chip heater you know going [inaudible] I've been trying six hours to get it going. [Son's name deleted] said he's at the pictures and he'll come here when he's finished at the pictures and have a look.

[Son's name deleted], so?

My son.

Does he work there?

No he's gone to the pictures with his mates.

Mmm. So are either of your sons married?

No. No one's 36 and the one in Canberra's 32.

Mmm, mmm and what about your other neighbours?

Oh, these are really good. They've been there for years and years and years and years but the one two doors down she sold up because she works at a supermarket and she couldn't stand all these rat bags next door. She just, two of them, another one over the back fence, been there for thirty years, just auctioned their houses and went because they can't stand these visitors. That's what annoys you so much. They're only visitors. They don't even live there yet they come in at all hours of the day and night, revving cars and yelling and screaming and ...

Mmm.

And you know decent people have to just sell up because [name deleted] works at a supermarket and she had to start work at seven o'clock in the morning.

Oh, mmm.

And other people they work shift work, you know firemen and that. Well if they can't get any sleep at night ...

Mmm.

And I mean you can complain to the police but I mean it seems, seems a petty thing to do but if you can't get any sleep and you've got to go to work, well ...

Mmm, so they actually make a noise in the street as well as ...

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah, they just do burnie-burnies, you know wheelie- wheelies and sit in the drive way and go ooh-ooh-ooh. It doesn't make any sense I mean I had two teenage sons and another lady around here had teenage sons, you wouldn't even know they had a car.

Mmm.

You know they'd get in their car and go off to A to B but these idiots they just ooh-ooh-ooh, just roar the engines you know.

Mmm.

And they ripped the front door off the house. They ripped ...

Next door?

Yeah. They've got no front door. The letterbox is new because they ripped the beautiful wooden letterbox off. They got louvres at the back. They're all gone.

Uh, huh.

I don't know what sort of people you know that are, wrecking the place you know.

Mmm.

It's just people like that ruin the whole ...

So do you talk to the woman and her daughter at all?

No, every time I go out there she's wraggling on. She's not foreign but I can't understand what the daughter's saying whether she's on ... People think they might be on drugs.

Mmm.

But other neighbours have called the police and of course they say we're going to fix you [name deleted] you know because ... And I, well it's not me that's called the police to them idiots but ...

Because people 've got belongings, expensive fishing equipment, bloke over the back's a fireman. He's got lots of stuff. He's frightened with all these hobos there they're going to break into his shed and steal stuff but ...

Mmm.

See the girl across the road she works and she's got a little baby nine months old, well she reckoned she was going to move to Launceston because she said, when her lease is up, because you know she can't get any sleep.

Mmm.

See this has only been the last five months.

[Long pause.] Mmm, so this is an easy house to look after though. You say there are some things you need to spend money on now.

Yes, well not now. Before I had to, put up new fences and I suppose soon the spouting. I have to get new spouting and ...

Mmm. Yeah and so a dole's just enough to tide you over.

Yeah.

It's not enough for mmm ...

Exactly.

Additional things.

So how did you manage with the fence?

Well I just put it on me credit card and paid it off.

Mmm. Yeah so all the money your father left you, that's gone now.

Oh yeah because that was 20 years ago.

So by the time I put the kids through school and paid the house a few times and I kept dipping into it to help pay the bills and ... [Pause.]

So, some of your other neighbours can you rely on them for help? Like if you were in an emergency ...

Oh yes.

And needed a lift?

Oh yes, next door [name deleted] and the one before that, [name deleted], and the one before, you know we all lived here for ...

Mmm.

They were all Housing Department tenants, they bought their houses here you know about ten or twelve years ago.

Mmm. So uh the one you said, [name deleted]'s the one who's moved?

Yeah she's gone now. And there's another girl on the corner. I've forgotten her name, [name deleted]. She works at [name of shop deleted]; the one owns the big house on the corner. She's been a manager for ten, 20 years.

Mmm.

She works at [name deleted], her husband drives a taxi and ... So I mean not good if there's, you know I say to someone sometime ... there was this guy who came, oh eighteen months ago, and I could see over the fence he had this sort of level, a sort of a level that was going to smash the links. The dog, like the girl ... Like this house was owned by a girl who had a big dog and this big dog used to bark all the time before these idiots moved in. She sold out. So the dog was barking and I was watching this comedy show and I thought what the bloody hell's he barking at. And I looked out the window and this guy's working down, I mean cheeky because there's a big light out there. Walking around with this tyre lever see you can't see from the front that anyone's at home because they don't have a car.

Mmm.

And so I just called the police and police said we'll send someone. And then I called [name deleted] and [name deleted] said beaut and he come over and ...

Your neighbour?

Yeah. And the police did catch him. The police come with their big torches and caught this guy up the street.

Mmm.

He jumped over the fences and the police said what's he like. And I said well he's bare feet because you could see under the streetlight. That's how stupid he was but you know he had white t-shirt and bare feet and such blonde hair.

Probably to be quiet, mmm.

Mmm. But because, I looked the next day, and because even if you've got lights on in the lounge room it looks like the house is empty because uh they don't have a car.

Mmm, yeah so people would assume they aren't there.

Yeah.

So those people next door, they actually own the house or are they renting?

Oh no, they're renting.

From the owner?

Yeah.

Mmm.

And they're renting through the real estate people out in [name of suburb deleted] and we rang the real estate people up so many times, and just ... They guy that owns it; he bought it in January. And he bought it and lives in Nubeena.

So he must have bought it as a, as an investment then.

Well there won't be much left of it by the time he ever comes to collect it. [Laughs.]

Oh dear, and he's aware of that do you think?

Don't think so because we don't know his name.

Mmm.

I mean people have rung up you know after the [inaudible] has sat over there for ages and they've rang the real estate and told them look these people are you know, the lawn, I mean a bit of lawn there and it's all just like a mud pile because they're just sitting there revving their cars up.

Mmm, so spinning their wheels on the lawn.

Yeah, spinning.

Mmm. So if you, if you could. I mean if you had the money and you could change your housing situation?

Well I'd like to brick it over, that's what I'd like to win some money, brick it over, because I'm quite happy here, because you know I've got me, everything, yeah, I know the people around the area.

And those people, the probably won't stay forever.

Well I hope they don't, that's it. So I hope that sooner or later they get chucked out.

Mmm, so you're pretty settled here?

Yeah.

So your thoughts about improving your housing situation really are about improving this house?

Yes that's right. Yes, yeah, I'd like to brick me house over because you know people say oh go on sell and buy a unit but if I sell well a unit's going to cost just as much anyway.

Mmm, so you like having a bit of a yard then?

Yeah.

Mmm.

Because [son's name deleted] comes and mows the lawns, if he just stops mowing the lawn then I'll just sell it and wander around Tasmania or the mainland and spend the money and end up being a no-hoper like anyone else.

Mmm.

I told him if he stops mowing the lawn, that's it.

Heh, heh.

Travel around until me money runs out.

Well you'd probably get a good price for it then.

Yeah about \$150,000 but then you've got to, you know if you wanted to buy another one, have to pay top dollar for the next one.

Yeah that's right so. So what does [son's name deleted] do?

Oh he only works at [name deleted]. He's got two degrees but he can't get a job, electrical engineer.

Mmm.

And the other one, the one that ...

So which [name of shop deleted], at [name deleted]?

No over at [name of shopping centre deleted], which is terrible, you know, long travelling.

Mmm.

He has a unit up in [name deleted] Court, [name deleted] Street.

Mmm.

And the other one works at [name of large national company deleted], that one always lands on his feet.

Huh.

He worked at the [name deleted] bank and he worked at [name deleted] and he worked at [name deleted] Credit Union.

Huh.

He always lands on his feet; talk about gift of the gab.

Mmm.

He lost his jobs at [name of large national company deleted] and what happens, he applies for three jobs and he's offered all three jobs.

Mmm.

And [sons name deleted]'s a really nice boy and ...

What's the other one's name?

[Name deleted]. *And he lands on his feet.*

Mmm.

Because with [name of company deleted] they weren't even you know, couldn't even get the dole or anything; they were just left high and dry. They weren't exactly sacked. They just, everything, locked out of their ... see you get the sack you can go to them and get unemployment benefits.

Oh, but if you don't get the sack?

Yeah. And see [name of company deleted], well [son's name deleted] said what's going to happen to him and I said I don't know, he's not coming back here. And uh anyway he went to the library on the Saturday, he lost his job on the Thursday night, [son's name deleted] said he went to the library on a Saturday like for packing groceries at the [name of shop deleted]; the [name deleted] Bank; and [name of company deleted] or whatever it is over at [name of suburb deleted] and he was offered all three and he took the [name deleted] Bank job. Then there was talk then you know about them sacking people at the [name deleted] Bank so he's gone to [name of large national company deleted].

So he works at [name of large national company deleted] but based here?

Yeah.

Mmm. And where does he live?

I don't know, somewhere in [name of suburb deleted] I suppose. He was in Launceston.

Oh so he stayed in this area, mmm. And so it's a three-bedroom house?

Yes.

Mmm, and you find that it's good to have the space?

Oh yes. I like to have space. I'd hate to be in those ... I delivered Meals-on-Wheels and I'd hate these little units where you can't move. I like to have a bit of... You know if I get sick of sitting in here I sit in the kitchen and if I get sick of sitting in the kitchen I go and you know in my bedroom. I just couldn't stand having one little ...

This is a good big room.

Yeah.

What's down stairs?

Just a cellar where I put me lawnmowers and things.

Mmm and so do you have people come and stay?

Yes, I have some friends from the mainland who come and stay.

Mmm, yeah because it's good to have the extra rooms for that sort of thing isn't it.

Yeah.

And nice for them too, to be able to come down.

You see my father lived with me after me Mum dropped dead of a heart attack; so Dad lived with me for a couple of years.

Oh. So when the kids were small. So when you were still renting.

Well yeah I was renting and then Dad sort of helped me pay it off and then I sort of, when he died I finished paying it off because he was a farmer. So Mum dropped dead of a heart attack and Dad had cancer, so he come from a small town in New South Wales so. He just retired so the, doctor said I had to bring him over here. So I just put the two kids in the one bedroom and I had to look after Dad for a couple of years because he had to have treatment and so forth every day and ...

Then he had some money left he was able to leave you?

Yeah well he had a farm.

Mmm, and you were an only child.

I was a bit of a surprise 'cos Dad was 52 when I was born. He got married for company I think and then I turned up. [Laughs.]

Oh, how old was your mother?

Thirty-two, yeah she was a music teacher and Dad was a farmer.

Mmm.

And people were surprised when he had two little grandsons because he thought the world of [name of son deleted] and [name of son deleted].

Mmm. Yeah, so you were born in New South Wales.

Yes, near [name of town deleted].

And how did you come to Tasmania?

With my creep of a husband, we met in Melbourne and his, mother-in-law, her husband got killed in a car accident and he said, oh Mum can't speak English and we have to go to Tasmania. Oohh!

So what language did they speak?

[Disparagingly.] *Polish!*

Mmm, oh so when you were saying, they were in the Polish community and you were actually staying with Polish people.

[Disparagingly.] *Yeah, over at [name of suburb deleted]. Oh it's not so bad now but oh those days I don't know how I never had a nervous breakdown. No one spoke English. The only person spoke English was the bus driver.* [Laughs.]

Laughs

You know they probably did speak but they were just so horrible you know. They just liked to marry into their own and...

Mmm, so there was a little community there of Polish people?

Yeah.

And so these are the ones that had the little shack on the land and they built their own houses.

Yeah, yes.

So were you staying in the shack?

Yeah, I was staying in the shack. My mother-in-law had this beautiful home in the front and, and people said when ... She worked all day. So you'd think that she'd stay in the shack and let me use the, the bathroom and you'd think for two little kids.

Because she was on her own in the house?

Yeah, big house, but no she wouldn't let me have a shower or anything like that. She was just a horrible person.

Mmm, so how did the, look after the kids?

I just had to carry buckets of water.

Mmm, how terrible.

Yeah. It was horrible and that's why you know my doctor had to complete and sent letters to the Housing. You know like nowadays you can have emergency housing.

Or you can give a priority?

Yeah. Because I've been on committees over the years with you know housing things and uh no they just wouldn't take any notice.

Mmm.

The worst thing I ever did, come to Tasmania but, too late now.

Mmm, mmm.

I don't like being here but I'm stuck here forever.

Mmm.

I liked living in Melbourne with all the markets and all the shows but I'd never ever be able to afford a house because it's half a million dollars for a tiny little weatherboard house.

Mmm. So the only thing that's likely to influence making a change to your housing is if [name of son deleted] doesn't mow the lawn anymore.

Yeah. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

It's one thing I won't do. I just won't mow the lawn.

Mmm, I suppose once you qualify for the age pension you might be in a position where you could either afford to get someone

Yeah.

Or get some form of assistance.

Yeah. Well I mean I look at it this way. He's going to get the house when I die [smiles] so it's only fair he mows the lawn.

Huh, huh, huh. And so you're going to leave it to him and you won't leave it to [name of other son deleted]?

No.

And are you able to do that?

Yes.

Oh you are.

Oh yes, because as soon as he assaulted me and I came out of hospital. You can leave them a dollar. [Laughs.] If you leave them a dollar ... [Laughs.]

So you've left him a dollar?

Yeah. This way ...

So you've got a will?

Yeah. I mean whether [name of son deleted] wants to give him half the house, I don't care. I'll be dead and gone and I don't care.

So you don't think about moving to a retirement unit then?

No, I don't think so.

Mmm.

Because that's what people said when [name of son deleted] moved out, oh you ought to go into Derwent Waters or someplace like that but everything's handy here.

Mmm.

I've lived here and I know the people on the bus and I know my neighbours.

Yeah, it's good knowing people isn't it?

But I've got [name deleted]'s phone number, [name deleted]'s next door and I just press the button and basically you know if you hear any noises of anything; not that they [inaudible] he was a once off that creepy guy. But uh I had the, he said don't turn the lights on, [name deleted]. He said just press the button and have the torch and I'll be over and he just comes over.

So it looks like yeah, that you're anticipating that you, you'll stay here?

Yes. Well just, people say, oh you're still there, only the people I haven't seen for years, you know people used to live here and I said well why would I move, I mean own the place what's the use of getting in more debt. I mean if I had heaps of money.

Mmm.

Then I might move down further, down [name deleted] Street somewhere near, so it's walking distance to the shops, you know.

Mmm.

Buy a unit, something like that down, either over [name of suburb deleted] or somewhere flat towards the shopping centre but I'm not going to go into a nursing home or...

[Laughs.] So how do you manage with your heavy shopping? Do you get it delivered or?

Well I can get it delivered. Sometimes [name of son deleted] took... [name of son deleted] takes me on Monday because I've been sick.

So every Monday?

Well just whenever I feel like it.

Mmm.

So sometimes you know [name of son deleted] ... Well I was working in a shop and [name of son deleted] knocked on the bus. He seen me get on the bus and he says ... And he got me off the bus and we went shopping last Monday.

Mmm.

Yeah because I was sick this weekend he went shopping for me on Friday so sometimes he takes me shopping. Sometimes I just buy a few things each day and sometimes I get a taxi home. It's just what I feel like.

Oh, mmm.

See with the doorstopper bus, it just stops at the end of the street.

And you don't have to carry it far.

No. And see you've got everything with the [name deleted] Council too. They supply lots of things for ... Not for me I mean but for the people, elderly ...

Yeah so ...

Yeah.

So if you were elderly you would.

See you've got health centres and things like that and you know, you can get your feet done down there and plenty of doctors and, plenty of doctors; there's always this thing about doctors, bulk billing, but there's plenty of doctors out there who still bulk bill, out there in [name of suburb deleted].

You've got a piano.

Yes. [Smiling.]

Do you play the piano?

I used to but I haven't played it for years. It was my grandmother's.

Mmm.

So it's been backwards and forwards, come from England and then it's been back to New South Wales and back to Melbourne and ... It's my grandmother's and see, my mother's and mine.

Yeah.

And [name of son deleted] studied it for a long time.

So how come it's gone back and forth?

Well, well it was my grandmother's and my grandmother lived in Melbourne.

Right.

So you know and she brought it out from England with her.

Mmm.

And then Mum took it to the farm in New South Wales.

Yes.

And then I brought it to Hobart. Mmm, so people think oh gee, it's all knocked around.

Do you keep it tuned?

I used to get it tuned but now [name of son deleted] and I have stopped playing I don't bother.

Mmm.

When he was studying music years ago we used to have it tuned all the time but [name of piano tuner deleted] died last year so ...

Oh the one who used to tune it?

Yeah, nice old bloke, [name of piano tuner deleted].

Mmm. There's still more on it. Sometimes you run out of things to say before it finishes. So do you find, I mean do you find that people treat you differently now that you're older?

Not really. Probably I never thought of it because there I always mix with older people.

Oh!

[Laughs.]

Huh

Because see when I was 39 and my husband died I joined the pensioner union because they told me there were all these things available you know.

Yeah.

To help with the kids. So I always mixed with people in their ...

Because mostly older people belong to the Pensioners' Union.

Yeah, yeah

Like old age pensioners.

Yeah.

And how have you found that?

Oh well they were all right until lately and I just got sick of them because they're in their nineties now and ...

[Laughs.]

I got sick of them.

So you've got friends in there, in their nineties.

Yeah.

Yeah.

And even a woman I work with in the [name of charity deleted] shop, she's ninety.

Oh you work in the [name of charity deleted] shop?

Yeah, yeah, a couple of times a week.

Oh.

Yeah and I work in the [name of charity deleted] in [name deleted] Street and work in the [name of charity deleted] op shops, and ...

Yeah.

Secretary treasurer of [name of charity deleted] and [name of charity deleted].

So they're mostly older people?

Yeah, so.

And so do they uh, some of them rely on you sometimes, like for, like for social contact or?

Oh no, what annoys me is, they're starting to make mistakes now in the shop

Oh.

And you can't get rid of them.

And they're in their nineties.

Yeah.

Amazing. In the [name of charity deleted] shop?

In the [name of charity deleted] shop.

[Name of charity deleted] shop, mmm

In the [name of charity deleted], [name of charity deleted] shop you don't have that many customers. It doesn't matter because it's only an op shop. In the [name of charity deleted] it's real big business.

Mmm.

You know you're taking orders for cakes and things all the, all the time for different organisations and you have to be on the ball and we don't know how to get rid of these old people who just keep making mistakes.

And I suppose it's such an important part of their life. It probably keeps them going.

Yes, because they've been there for 40 years and when I say look that Mars bar that's \$7.10 not \$10.60. The lady won't come back if you charge her twice the amount. You know I mean it's just as bad charging them twice the amount as not enough.

Mmm.

And she says I never had trouble with anybody else and I'm not working with you anymore and...

Huh.

So you've got these old people there and I'm sure when I'm 80 and I make mistakes, I'll give it away.

[Laughs.]

Mmm-mmm. I mean having the experience you've had, yeah. [(Laughs.)]

[Laughs.]

Yeah because I suppose they're not aware.

Well they just say I've been working here for 40 years you know and they're just like statues. You can't move 'em.

Mmm, mmm. Yeah, oh well it was a good thing to do I suppose, you know for you, being on your own with the kids.

Well that's it, because well I've got no family you see. If I had sisters to go shopping with or go on holidays with or anything like that, fine but I mean I can't just sit here every day and look at the four walls. Been sick the last four days and it's driven me up the wall. I'll have to go out tomorrow or I'll go mad. [Laughs.]

So you've had that bad flu have you?

Yes.

Yeah I had that.

Yeah I had asthma on Thursday night and I went to hospital for a couple of hours.

Asthma?

Yes.

Mmm.

Because you can't breathe when it's ...

Yeah I had a bit of that with the flu.

And so, you know I went to the doctor on Friday and he gave me all these puffers and pills.

Have you had a puffer before?

Oh yeah, I've had it for about five years, ever since I got assaulted.

Mmm.

I was a pretty healthy person ...

That was five years ago?

Yeah.

Mmm. And what sort of injuries did you get?

Well I'm nearly blind in my left eye and I had, oh I had ...

Did your eye bleed or?

Well I just can't see sort of. It's all blurry and everything.

Yeah.

And oh, broken ribs. And broken hand because I put me hand up to protect meself. And well I, nobody wants to be involved in an assault you find. [Name deleted] was a good doctor. He sent me to the hospital and they kept me in there four hours and told me to get going.

Oh.

And I was vomiting and pooing myself and I said look I'm dying. I'm literally dying and they said look there's nothing wrong with you, get going. So I staggered round to the police station to get a court order to get him out of the house because see he lived here.

Oh I didn't know he was living here.

Yeah. He lived here. And I collapsed at the Police Station and the Police had to fight to get me readmitted and when I got readmitted from being told there was nothing wrong with me, no one believes this, I was put in intensive care.

Mmm.

I mean if [name of son deleted] hadn't 've been with me I'd have laid down on the, the floor and, and street and probably died.

So [name of son deleted] was with you?

Yeah because he never left me side.

Mmm.

The policeman said what's wrong you. And he said well, my brother assaulted Mum, we've come over here to get a court order to get him out of the house and the hospital's throwed Mum out in the street and said there's nothing wrong with her.

Mmm.

And you know I was just you know vomiting and pooing myself and

Mmm.

All shakey and they said you're just frightened. There's nothing wrong with you. They just didn't want to be involved. They just ...

Mmm.

I was surprised that nobody wants to do anything.

So it did something to your lungs then, the broken rib?

Yeah, well, well the, you know that sticks into your lungs. I didn't have a collapsed lung but I had broken ribs and broken hand because he just punched me so many times.

Mmm. I guess being a family thing they didn't want.

No.

To be involved too? Although most assaults are family aren't they?

Yeah. No but I mean doctors and nurses I think it's ... I don't expect people to take my side

Mmm.

But I do expect people to look after me.

Mmm.

This is the point. For them to tell me there's nothing wrong with me. I didn't expect them to say oh you're a good little girl, poor, you know take my side.

Mmm.

I didn't expect the Police to take my side but I didn't expect them to swear and carry on at me either.

Mmm.

[Laughs.] But oh, that's what annoys me so much. I don't expect people to take my side but I don't expect people to take his side either.

Mmm. But you feel that in this situation they did take his side?

On both occasions, 15 years between I went to court with my husband after 18 years. The Police all come running through this house when they had court orders and called me a rich bitch because I had money from my father because my husband he'd been picked up from the house before

Mmm.

And taken down to the Police Station and he said oh I'm living in a park. You know a sob story like my son. I'm living in a park and her father left her all this money and, and so the cops come to my house. In front of my little kids, and said you rich bitch he said, your own husband sleeping in the park and you won't give him anywhere to live and all this you know.

Mmm.

And uh I was appalled and ...

In fact you paid for the house with your money.

Yeah, and the point was, my lawyer said right we couldn't find him. He kept moving around. He was real cunning my husband because with a court order you can't have a court order. He's got to have one.

Mmm.

And he kept moving around. His mother said me no understand English. His sister said me no understand English, every time the Police went. And he kept moving ...

So this is why you've got a foreign surname isn't it?

Yeah.

I never thought of that. What is it again?

[Name deleted]. *Polish. So what happened, I rang my lawyer up and said the Police have been here a couple of times today and he said and we can't serve him you know. He keeps wandering off.*

Mmm.

And so he said right, and the lawyer got a copy of the paper and come to the house to serve him, with a policeman.

Mmm.

And on the way up to the police station the police kept talking about rich bitch and blah, blah, blah and don't take her side, to my lawyer.

That is unbelievable. Well I've never experienced anything like that.

Anyway, because when I said to my lawyer, I said look you're not going to believe this but they called me a rich bitch. And he said I know Mrs [name deleted] he said the same thing to me in the car coming up because he said to me keep calm Mrs [name deleted] because I'm coming with a court order. He said I'm at the police station come up in the police car.

Mmm.

So he came up in the police car but my husband ran through the house, next door to my friend's.

Mmm.

He's ... Anyway, afterwards my lawyer had these policemen shipped off you know because they were just ... It was the same time as Mrs Thompson was going through it and she never got any help and support.

No.

And she ended up chopped up in ...

No. Maureen.

[Problem with the tape; probably recorder off but still on play.]

[Starts again where she is telling how her father used to give her husband money.]

So he could go gambling. He was really a horrible person.

And your father would do it?

Well what could he? He was sick and old.

Mmm. Goodness me. That must have made you angry. Mmm, so you put up with a lot before you made the decision.

Yeah. Because where was I going to go.

Mmm, so you didn't want to ... You felt you couldn't leave here?

Well I thought I was going to lose the house and I thought I've hung on, I've paid for this.

Was it in his name?

No. It was in my name. It was in joint names because I paid for ... I paid for the inside of the house.

Yeah.

But my husband got a bit of money from his father and he paid for the outside of the house. So...

Oh so you'd already ... You were buying it on a purchase contract?

We were buying it. And his father died so he paid for the, the ten thousand dollars on the outside of the house.

What work that was done?

Yeah. No, no. No, the building.

Oh.

Like the building was worth ten thousand dollars.

Oh right, yeah.

So my husband's father died and he paid for the ten thousand dollars for that but I paid for everything inside of the house.

So was that the deposit or was that full price of the house?

That was the full price of the house. Ten thousand. So, so that's where ...

So did you pay your husband out when your father died?

No, no we still lived here and so that's where the problem was. It was in joint names because everything, I paid for the oil heater and I paid for the inside and I paid all the bills. And so we had it in both our names and I thought well even if I'd paid for the whole lot of it I'd have lost half of it because you go in you know a housing department unit because I'd get half and he'd get half. And my lawyer said well you can stay in the house until the kids turn eighteen. So I had about three or four years to go and that didn't suit my husband because he wanted to run off with the woman next door.

Oh.

Yes and I said well I'm not signing the house over. And that, it's like [son's name deleted] you know. He wanted me to sign the house over. He said I paid for half and I said I don't care. I said you get half the house later. I wasn't going to pay him off because I didn't want to sell the...

Mmm, and why make it easier for him if him to run off, when he hadn't done the right thing anyway?

Yeah, yeah.

Yes so, when did you pay him your half?

Never did [laughing] because he died.

Oh he died yeah.

Oh yeah he just decided to ... I could have paid him off.

Yeah. How did he die?

Jumped off the bridge.

Oh that's right you told me that, yeah.

Yes because he got angrier and angrier.

Oh because he couldn't come back even though ...

Yeah, couldn't come back and he couldn't get the house to go off with the girlfriend.

Oh right, yeah.

Yeah and so he kept saying, you know ...

So he was in a real difficult situation.

Yeah. He kept wandering back into the house and the police kept taking him away and calling me a rich bitch and all this rubbish. And in the end the police locked him up because he kept calling me every hour on the hour. And uh ...

Mmm.

And the police finally found him and locked him up and the next morning he realised... Oh he attacked the police, that's right.

Mmm

When my lawyer came with the ...

Mmm.

When my lawyer came with the restraining order and chased him in next-door he attacked the police and that's why the police locked him up. But before that the police were saying I was a rich bitch and it was all imagination.

Mmm.

And he attacked the police when the lawyer served this paper on him because he was caught out and uh that was when he was going to go up on all these charges. He kicked the police car in and he assaulted the cops and ...

Mmm, so he was going to go to gaol.

Gaol year and that was it you know, that was the end of the thing and so when they released him on bail he went and jumped off the bridge.

Mmm, mmm.

Good riddance to bad rubbish.

Mmm.

I said pity I wasn't up there to give him an extra shove. [Laughs.]

And his parents are both dead now?

Yeah.

And does he still have any siblings?

Oh yeah.

Mmm.

His mother was still alive for years and years. But she's dead now. He's got a sister, over a couple of streets away and she was, caused a lot of problems when my husband died. Want this house and what not. You know, nothing to do with them. They come to after he drowns, after he jumps, instead of coming to see the kids. I have no family because my parents were dead and my aunties and uncles have all died off. Where is the Will? You know, there's no Will. I said get out of the house. Anyway my sister-in-law caused a lot of problems. She's still alive but about three years ago her three children drowned and I thought well I'm usually a kind-hearted person ...

What happened?

Oh they went fishing, lake, up at some lake. Lake Arthur. And I thought well she got what she deserved because she just caused so many problems, saying I was involved with men and did this and did that you know, in the Polish community you know.

Yeah.

And I thought well she got what ...

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 27

How long have you lived here?

Ten years.

And where did you live before you moved here?

I lived between two places and that was [name of town deleted].

Mmm.

And a unit a little closer into the CBD.

Mmm, so what led you to move here?

I was mainly ... We'd let the place at the unit, the CBD and [husband's name deleted] had a house at [name of town deleted] and ...

Oh because your husband wasn't retired?

He wasn't retired then no, and I was only working three days. Three days or four days, it was three days I think a fortnight. So I'd come down and stay with my daughter because we'd let the unit because we were going to come back there to retire.

Mmm.

But we had a daughter with a mental health problem

Mmm.

And we had her children a lot and we thought the unit won't be any good to us so we sold the unit, bought an old house here, had it pulled down because we still, we wanted to live close but realised the benefit of being old and living where you can walk to things.

Mmm.

So we built this place, with a flat in underneath for our daughter.

Oh, mmm. I see, mmm.

And now I'm on my own. [Laughs.]

So your daughter's not living there?

No, no. Her mental illness. She was unstable in ... you know, I want to live there build me a flat and never come

Mmm.

And we couldn't get to the bottom of it and we couldn't understand and ... but my daughter's gone to Queensland and they've got their finger right on it and she's getting all the help she needs.

Mmm.

So she'll never come back and live in the flat. [Laughs.]

Oh right. So she hasn't ever lived in it?

No.

No. Right, mmm. But that's worked out for you anyway.

Yes well I've got a single lady in the flat. She, they were married. Her husband died three weeks after mine.

Mmm.

So now she's in the flat and it stops that feeling of absolute emptiness.

So is she an older person?

Yes, she's 87.

Oh, mmm. And so do you know her very well? Do you see her very often?

Ah, I've learnt enough in life that if you're going to live very close to a person, you're better not to get too familiar.

Mmm.

And so I, like I called [name of tenant deleted] yesterday and shared the joke about the tree and you know then I say, well off you go, have a cup of coffee with her. That's as far as we go.

Mmm. So you don't get involved in each other's personal lives.

No, no.

Mmm. And what do you like about living here?

Well I can walk to the post office. I can walk to the library. I, I love a bargain. I can go when they've reduced the price of the cake instead of having to bake a cake.

Mmm.

I know when the use-by date is, so I go down in the morning, the next morning and I know they're going to reduce it.

Mmm.

And, it makes for cheaper living. It doesn't matter if I've missed out that morning, I can go the next morning. I didn't have to drive a car so it didn't cost me anything to go.

Mmm.

So I'm a good bargain hunter and that fits into my life. I like exercise. If you live too far out, you, you go and get a ride.

Mmm. Where living ... this, makes you walk.

Mmm.

Mmm and you leave the car at home

Mmm .And then when it comes time that I can't drive I can still walk and get my feet seen to or go and see Social Security, have a read in the library.

Mmm.

And I'm well.

Mmm

But I'm frightened that the day might come when I can't cope with this big house because the lady underneath won't be there forever.

Mmm.

And I don't want to take young people into that flat, so I don't know what I'm going to do but I'm not going to cross that bridge till it comes.

Mmm. I suppose if you're careful of who you select it would probably turn out all right.

If I'm careful of what?

Of who you select for it.

Oh yes, but sometimes you don't get any choice. It's underneath a house, which means not everybody's interested in it.

Mmm.

And then, I've had people that have stolen milk from over the road and you know different other worries right on your doorstep and I feel as though I'm too old to be bothered with that.

Mmm.

And elderly people are not looking for a home.

Mmm.

They usually can get that through the Housing Department or they've had their home for years and they're staying in it but an elderly person would be great.

Mmm.

But I'm not, as I say it's no good crossing them until it comes.

Mmm.

I might be gone before her.

Mmm. And uh, you feel safe living here?

Yes. But it's ... [Laughs.] My husband, he put bars in the garage underneath so I'm not frightened someone 'll smash the garage windows and come up the stairway because luckily I've got bars on there. And uh, its ... My daughter insisted that I have a self-opening door, so I come up the road, press the button, the door's open, put my car in, press the button, the door's shut and I'm safe. And uh, the back door I lock the fly wire and the, the other door for the night but I don't put the deadlock on because if someone wanted to smash the window and get in that, they can do that but I have got a fly wire locked as well, so as if I have to talk to somebody I've still got that barrier.

Mmm.

And that makes me feel very safe. I have a speaker.

Mmm.

On that wall over there and if somebody knocks on my ... If I hadn't 've know you were coming ...

Yeah.

I'd have spoken to you and said who is it please.

Oh, yeah, mmm. So how long have you had that?

And if said it was Jehovah's witnesses I'd say no, sorry and you know, I'm really not a ...

But they wouldn't say would they? [Laughs.]

Oh not that. Or if they say they're collecting I say come round the back because I can't really be bothered undoing Fort Knox to give them a couple of dollars or I send them round the back. But that makes me feel very safe having that speaker there and that was all done before my husband passed away you see.

Mmm.

Because when he was still working up at [name of town deleted] and we built this place and my job came into full-time and I lived here and he'd ring me morning and ring me night.

Oh

And come home at the weekend and I'd be living here and he made it all safe for me.

Mmm.

So that was really good.

Mmm.

I feel quite safe.

Mmm and it's, well it's not very costly to heat is it? Or...

No, it isn't.

What sort of heating do you have?

Immersed ceiling.

I can feel it. It's warm.

Mmm. No it's quite warm. It's a very good heater.

Mmm.

And uh, no it's not costly. Nowhere near like wood or anything.

So it's in all the rooms and you can turn it on?

Yes, it's, it's in that computer room. It's in the kitchen and it's in this lounge. But to turn it on to warm up for you, it would have taken a while because it has to heat the furniture and the, anything metal around's quite warm; and they all give off heat.

Mmm.

As well as the heat coming down because it'd take too long to warm that up but I've got other heaters that I can use if I was caught but ...

So you did all that when you built the house?

Yes, but I don't think that's ever been on. The kitchen's never been on. And neither has the computer room.

Mmm, so you just use this one?

Yes, there's enough warmth, unless it's a freezing night, you don't need it.

Mmm.

Enough warmth seems to seep out.

Mmm.

Yes.

And is there anything you don't like about living here?

Old sticky beak over the road. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

[Laughs heartily.] *Mischief making sticky-beak.*

Oh.

You know she adds a bit on and says, that's what they're doing to you, you know, to make mischief.

Oh.

And so she's a bit of a nuisance but I just ignore her because it's not my fault she's like that. Too bad.

Mmm, so she talks to the other neighbours?

Yes, but she doesn't last long with them. She gets out after a while, so you don't, they all know her, mmm. Yeah, but she's done enough to make a coldness between me and the other neighbour.

Oh.

Uh, like me and my grandchildren were; I told you my daughter was, had a problem. I had the grand children a lot. She would say to them, they've been riding on your lawn today

Mmm.

Or, I saw them at your letterbox and they weren't even, I hadn't even brought them home till six o'clock you know. And he'd say I've had a cheque stolen out of my letterbox.

Mmm.

Was it your children?

Oh dear.

And I'd say, no. "Would you look around?" And I'd know that it's her, you know so that, that's the biggest but as I say, other neighbours know her; so I don't worry about her too much. I just go on my way.

So how old are the children?

That I used to have, that have gone?

Your grandchildren.

The little girl; they've been away for 12 months.

Oh.

She, the youngest one's ten. And, the next one up is twelve and the next one up is fourteen and the next one up, sixteen.

Oh, there were four of them.

Mmm.

So they were all a year younger when they were here. So [inaudible].

Yes, well she, she had a problem that's very close to bipolar disorder.

Mmm.

And, I had an arrangement if she suddenly became unwell that I'd take the children you see. So I'd get them and of course this neighbour doesn't know why, because you know it's something they don't understand.

So she would know when she was becoming unwell, would she?

Ah, well it'd suddenly come on her.

Mmm.

Like, just a really angry turn and everything's trouble and she wants to kill herself and you know all that sort of thing. I've been 18 years in Tasmania searching for help.

Oh.

And, the only people I struck were people who were interested in pay day.

Mmm.

Nothing else. And she got up there, had another go, ended up in hospital, attempted suicide and uh they said oh they'd let her out but she had to go and see the psychiatrist. So she rang me up and said Mum this is going to be my last time at trying. I'm going to go with this interview but I'm not trying anymore. "Can you send me up a fax or something?", because I, she knew I'd done things for these people. But I had a day and I had an appointment that day so [laughs], I hunted through my computer found a little bit I'd had on it before and sent that up to them.

What, like a background history or something?

Yeah, a background history and, because I wanted them to understand; so I wanted them to see her like I have viewed her.

Oh so you had written it about her?

I've written right; I'd written about ten things at ten different times and then I'd put the ten together. This is what she was, something that would 've happened when she was seventeen. This was something she had happen some other time.

Mmm.

Just to give a picture of different things, like running out of a doctor's surgery when he mentioned hysterectomy.

Oh.

That sent her into one of these turns.

Mmm.

And, and she said to me Mum I had to run. I pulled his glasses off.

Oh.

Well I put that in so they could see it wasn't just ordinary bad temper.

Mmm.

You know and done all that. Anyway I sent it up to Queensland, she had to call on her way because I had to send it to somebody else. See they didn't have a computer you know. So she called and got it on the way and come home with a diagnosis.

Mmm.

And then she had to go and see another fellow because the lady 'd left and gone to New Zealand and he said I thoroughly agree. It's correct.

Oh.

And yet I've been 18 years here trying to get help.

And didn't get a diagnosis?

Never even got a diagnosis. Never got past a social worker.

Mmm.

That's down at this. What's that house down there, [name deleted] House?

Mmm. And so for how long at a time have you had the children normally.

Oh! Oh, I've had em for three months. It depends really on her situation.

Mmm.

Mmm, yeah. And that was one of the big problems when my husband died. How can, cos he helped me you see and here was I going to be with four children on a pension, paying extra Hydro and I thought if the government could just give me someone to give me house a clean once a week, it'd be a help.

Mmm.

But there's no help for grandparents, as you will probably know.

Yes. Mmm that's been in the paper.

There's nothing.

Mmm.

No there's a lot of improvement to be made.

Mmm.

And anyway she couldn't cope. She couldn't cope knowing she was a burden to me.

Mmm.

And she was cut up about her father passing away.

Mmm.

She didn't like to see me in the state I was in and she moved to her brother and he looks after her; he's been very good to her, mmm.

Oh.

That's what happened there.

So you've got other children?

I've got three; a daughter that still lives here.

Mmm, and do the others have children?

Yeah, my daughter here's got four; 21 next birthday, one 18 next birthday and twins 11, oh... Yeah 11 next birthday. No they're 12 next birthday. I lose track.

Mmm.

And uh ... I think they're 12 next birthday. And my son in Queensland has one, just about to turn 20 and one just about to turn 22.

Oh, so that's the eldest is it?

Yes. He's coming over next week.

Oh.

And he'll spend a couple of days here.

Yeah, so where are they? Where's your daughter and your eldest son?

[Conversation deleted.]

Oh, his children have left home?

Yes.

[Conversation deleted.]

[Laughs.] Mmm, so is there anything you'd change about here or because it's all new and you've planned it and it's secure and the heating's fine.

Yes the heating's fine; the nearness to the shop's fine.

Yeah.

My daughter can pop down to the shops; see how I am; no trouble to her to call in.

So she lives really close?

Yeah. She lives up [name deleted] Street.

Oh she's the one you had the cup of tea with on Sunday.

Yes, yes, yes. So she lives up there and if she's you know, rushed because she's working, knocks off at nine a.m., goes back at three. So she has the middle of day.

Oh.

And if she's you know running short of time, she's coming down to get something. She'll duck around here, have a cup of tea, go shopping or I'll go with her. It's very, very convenient.

Mmm.

And the lady under me, her family find it the same, living this close.

Yeah.

Mmm.

Yes. So it is an ideal place for an older person to live.

Yes, very ideal.

It's nice to live alone here. Mmm, yeah so it's a unique set up.

Yes I think so and of course we intended to retire here so that's why you can drive a car right round to the back door and if you need help getting out of the car, you've only got a step and you're inside the house. So we did it all.

Mmm.

We thought it all out for our retirement.

Mmm.

[Laughing.] But it's for my retirement now, mmm.

What about the stairs?

No worries. I didn't want the stairs because I've got knees that are funny.

Mmm.

And they've been funny for a long time. And I said to my husband I wouldn't be able to cope with the stairs. That's just taking space out of the house. But he won and he put the stairs in. Well that's the biggest godsend to me, coming in the garage. I'm safe.

Mmm.

Up the stairs and I'm no worse than I was.

I suppose if you had to you could live downstairs. You'd have that choice if the place became vacant.

Yes I would and put somebody in here but I couldn't cope with other people I don't think in my old age. I've seen; it's too much for you. Your mind goes a little bit funny. Little things worry you.

To be renting?

Yes, to put somebody else in.

Mmm, so would you think of moving then if you had to?

Well I'm not going to cross the bridge.

Oh.

Till it comes.

Mmm.

I certainly hope something will fall into place. Like somebody, I'll walk and whatnot and somebody might say well I'll let my place and come and shift in here. You never know. So what's the good of worrying.

Mmm. So do you have? I mean have you thought of where you would like to live or what sort of place you'd like to live in?

It'd only be here.

Oh. You mean in this area?

Yeah. I wouldn't like now to go and live where I had to catch a bus or get a taxi or something. This is so close to everything and we're going to have a Big W down here and that'll be another big shop I'm close to.

Mmm.

I'd be silly to shift out but then I might have to if I can't cope with the, quietness of a six-bedroom house.

It's six-bedroom is it?

Mmm

I had no idea it was so big.

No three up here and three down there.

Oh, oh, oh.

Six-bedroom. Once the lady goes you see because it links up. There's a door at the bottom of the stairs goes into hers.

So it can be one place?

It can be one. It was two, one the same.

So if you were to move to another place you'd be looking for something smaller and just a single dwelling.

I try not to think about it.

A unit complex?

I'm messy as you can say. I need space. I've got friends that 've got. Oh one lady's room is no bigger than this that we're in now.

Mmm.

And her bedroom opens off like the lounge room opens off this one and it's a kitchen and everything.

What sort of housing's that? Is that public housing?

Yes.

Mmm.

But she's never got a thing out of place. She can live in it but I wouldn't be able to.

Yeah I suppose people adjust.

Mmm.

When you have to get rid of things you do, mmm.

Yes I've got two, two friends with houses. Another one's got her own and but you see they never put anything down and forget to put it away. They're all much the same. So yes, I don't think I could cope with living in a little place but I'm going to get older and I'm going to have to do something

Mmm.

But I'm not worrying about it. I might be dead tomorrow and I've done all the worrying for nothing so what's the good of it.

Yeah.

[Laughs.]

Yeah but so it might come that you wouldn't want a place as big as this but you wouldn't want a really small place either.

No, that's right.

If you had the choice.

No.

And if you could afford it.

Well you need, I mean if the grandkids had to be cared for, for a couple of days I can do that.

Mmm.

You get a small place and it gets a bit hard if you want to do that. Mum and Dad want a holiday on their own and my grandkids come down, bring their friend down and I've got room, mmm. But this is ideal for an older person; keeps you exercising.

Mmm.

Because you don't catch a taxi and you don't have to remember everything. If I'm going to cook something and I'm right out of mayonnaise.

[Laughs.]

A few minutes, ten minutes and I'm back home again.

Yeah. Woolworth's is open.

Yeah, open till nine. It's an ideal spot and I love it.

Mmm. And what about your car? What sort of car do you have?

Ah, Nissan Pulsar I think it is, just a little one.

So is that, how old's that?

Eighteen months.

Oh it's a new one.

Yes. Yes because I had a ... You know the big Hiace computer, comm commuter van.

Oh for the kids?

Well we could take eight kids and our double bed in the back because we cut and shut it. We were a team. My husband did the mechanical things and I did the sewing things so he took the springs out. We modelled it so it fitted in behind that seat and come out into [laughs] into the other one.

Oh.

It was an odd shaped mattress when we were finished but it meant we could take the children as well and we could go away and stay the night and that and what not.

So you could take eight grand children with you?

Yeah but it was too big for me because I had to park it out the back there and, because it wouldn't go in the garage with the high top. There was only one place in town with it and if you just got a little parking spot it was too big to reverse park into that so I decided I'd sell it. They say don't do anything until you've been on your own for at least twelve months.

Mmm.

But that was something I did do within five months uh I felt that I needed the smaller car to park in and getting in the garage; coming in the way I do now.

And so it's only about two years since your husband died.

Not quite two years, yes. He died on the [pause] 22nd December.

And this is a photo of him up here I think is it?

Yes that's him.

Mmm, oh.

[Gets some other photos.] And that's him with our grandson because we took him a lot. That was the eldest one of the daughter that's got problems.

Oh.

And we had him a lot, yes.

He looks lovely.

Mmm. [Noises of putting photo back.] Yes, just on Christmas; walked down the passage as we were going to go and have a look at the Christmas lights; didn't feel well. He threw me the keys. He said you're going to have to drive. I went up to get his jacket and come down; stumbling and throwing his hands round; it could ... Looked like a blind man. He looked as though he couldn't see and uh, [pause] he was gone.

Mmm.

Brainstem haemorrhage.

Goodness me.

Mmm. Yes so had this before Christmas and we buried him the day before.

So it was an aneurysm or something?

Well I suppose it might have been similar to that, just brainstem haemorrhage they said.

Mmm.

So whether you call that an aneurysm because the aneurysm is when it's, a vessel swells and bursts.

Yeah.

But I don't know whether that's what it was because he was having a lot of trouble with his neck.

Oh.

I don't know you know if it's the same or not. I think it was brainstem haemorrhage. But he was working on his vintage car and uh, he used to say to me when he got under the cars, you've got no idea what that does to me. So I think it was you know something to do with possibly, being from a... He's been in a car accident and could 've been something as a result of that. Dr [name deleted], you wouldn't know; years ago he was the neurosurgeon at the Royal and he'd gone to him with the trouble in his neck. And he said never let anybody manipulate your neck. So I presume there was something that he based that on.

Mmm. Goodness me.

But thank goodness for television.

Mmm.

Heh. Thank goodness for living close.

Mmm.

Thank goodness for the old motorcar. They all help to make life easy.

So what do you enjoy watching on TV?

Oh, mainly real life shows. You know Millionaire and these quizzes, Australian Story and naughty Kath and Kim. Do you watch them?

Yes.

I laugh and laugh. I go to bed to watch them and I've got everything like as though it was planned to make things comfortable. I've got the television, my husband put a hole in the wall in the bedroom and uh, I can set my TV to go off in an hour or something you see. I just watch TV and I drop off to sleep and off it goes. So all these comforts all set up for me.

You've got your little dog.

Yes. I don't know how long I'll have her for. It's a wonderful company but a bit of a handicap. I'd pop up to Queensland [laughs] and see me kids if I didn't have the dog. But you see she's so tiny I don't like giving her to other people because you open the door and you don't see them behind your heel, so they could be gone, so...

Mmm and would you leave her in a kennel?

No she's not a dog; she's a person.

And you can't take her with you?

Well I did when I went last year.

But you think she's probably a bit old to travel?

Well she hated the travelling. Mmm, yes I took her up. Cost me nothing.

Mmm.

Qantas take her for nothing but Virgin Blue charge you. But I took her Qantas for nothing. But it was a long, long time for her to be in the portable cage. But now they've got direct I might think again about it because it wouldn't be so bad you know just two or three hours at a time.

Yeah, I've taken mine up once when she was very young and I didn't want to leave her but, last time I left her in a kennel and I'm going to leave her in a kennel again.

Oh.

I left her at Balcarres.

Well she frets if I leave her with the kids.

Mmm.

She doesn't eat you know she's almost human. She knows, watches for me big time to go to bed because she's got her bed near mine and if I went and had a rest in the day time she'll run to sit up on the bed and I have to lift her up because it's too high for her. Uh but never asks of a night.

She knows the routine.

Yes, she does but sometimes you know when it's been really snowy and windy and cold I've thought to myself, I'll go to be early. I've had early tea. Gone in because I've got this tellie up high, snuggling up in the bed, she'll come up and demand to get up on the bed because it's not time for bed.

Oohh.

She knows. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

They know. They've got a wonderful sense.

Mmm.

Mmm.

So do you find people treat you differently now that you're older?

I did think I had to let my daughter know that I was still able to run ... She became [pause] a bit smothering, trying to look after me you know.

The daughter who lives nearby?

Yes and I really needed to let her know that I had things to do. Also I felt I had to give her the freedom. I'm not expecting her to, to be always [inaudible]. So I've gone out and I've got into walking groups and things and filled my life with other things. [Laughs.]

Mmm.

And quite enjoy the company, all older people and I enjoy that and I go to the gym.

Mmm, so you're in more than one walking group?

Yes.

Mmm.

I'll be walking tomorrow with the Retired Person's Group that I joined five weeks after my husband passed away. And Saturday I'll be walking with the Tortoise Club.

Mmm.

That I joined three weeks after my husband passed away and next Tuesday I'll be walking with the, Health Department down here.

At the Health Centre?

Yes, the Health Centre run one on a Tuesday and my husband and I both used to go to that.

Mmm.

So I'll be doing that and I'll be going to the gym after that and next Wednesday I'll be walking with another club which I've been today with.

So what gym do you go to?

[Name deleted.] *They have a program for older people, mmm.*

Mmm.

Yes so, I keep busy.

Mmm, so your blood pressure, that must be all right?

Ah, yes, my blood pressure, I'm inclined to be a little low on my blood pressure.

Oh.

But my cholesterol's terrible. [Laughs.]

Mmm. What is it?

It was eight.

Oh.

But I don't eat fat. I cut the fat off everything. I buy ... If I buy mince which is rarely, I buy the expensive one from Coles with no fat and, but going to the gym allowed me to eat a bit more too because I was getting it off. So I've had a chocolate or two that I wouldn't 've had before and that's put it on. Although it is in your system sometimes that, it just happens.

Yes.

So I've got to go back and get it checked. See if I've managed to knock it back a bit.

And are you on any medication for that?

No but he might it on, put me on. I don't know but he did tell me to eat that margarine with the plant whatever there is that, eats up the cholesterol. So I've been using that. So I'm hoping that's knocked it back a bit, but otherwise I'm terribly healthy. I never have a day's sickness or anything.

Mmm and so do you have, like friends that you visit, or who visit you?

Ah, yes I ... When my husband died that was me big thing because we were in the [name deleted] club. You don't drive a vintage car you don't have the friends so I ...

So all your friends were in the [name deleted] Club?

Yes. We didn't really socialize any other ...

Mmm

With any other people, because we come down from, you know mainly, travelling back and forwards to [name of town deleted] and then when he retired we were fully in the [name deleted] Club but as those clubs go, once you're not able to be the same as them you sort of drop out. And they were going to do this and do that for me, but I've never seen it done. I've done my fencing myself [laughs] that they were going to do.

Oh.

[Laughs.] Yeah a kindly old lady invited me to dinner at night, one night on a Sunday night and, invited another single lady to help her because she ... I hadn't long lost my husband and she felt she couldn't cope so she asked another lady that was from the walking group you see, Mrs [name deleted], she was from the walking group that my husband and I both went, so [sighs] they said it'd be nice if we could do it regularly. And there was another lonely lady there, a new Australian lady. So I said well do you mind if I ask her; so we made it a four thing and we're taking turns at having dinner at each other's places.

Mmm.

So that's been really good.

Yeah. It would be, mmm. How often do you do that?

Oh well we just, like we were there last weekend. We missed this weekend. I'm going out this one coming up, to one. It's the person who's going to be the hostess that says when it's going to be.

So it doesn't have to be on the same night?

No it doesn't have to be. Like it'll be ... I think it's my turn next time but if I didn't want it for a month I'd say, well I'll do it in a month's time. If I think oh, it's lovely to have their company, I'll do it in a fortnight's time if it suits them you see and it is lovely. We play a game and have a good night. We never come away without playing a game and it does us good, yeah. I wish every lonely person could get into a group like that.

It's good, mmm. So they're friends; basically an informal group isn't it.

Yeah and we have a lovely time and they let me take my dog. She goes too so it's quite good. She has a little basket she sleeps in and she's very quiet, yes. She never runs round their house except one lady's got a cat and she pinches the cat's food.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *But I think this is a very ideal thing for an old person, to live close everything.*

Mmm.

If anybody's you know going somewhere it's no trouble for them to call in by, pick me up. I've got friends calling to pick me up in the morning to go on the walk.

Mmm.

Because we take turns of running cars you see.

Oh.

Yeah. It's no trouble to them. They don't have to go up the back blocks to find me.

Yes it is easier to find someone when they're central. I found it easy to find this place.

Yes. Except one lady [laughs] from Kingston that I've met through the Retired Persons, and she was coming up and I told her to come up from [name deleted] Street, you know the roundabout there, but

she didn't think when it turned the corner she thought the street had another name so [laughing] she went back again. She couldn't find it. [Laughs.] The police who live, who operate from the [name deleted] Road, and this is parallel to the [name deleted] Road, [name deleted] Street, and they didn't know where [name deleted] Street was so they had to use the phone to ring [laughs] and find out, so. [Laughs.]

Oh well, I looked it up in the street directory. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

So you were just up in Devonport for the weekend?

Yes.

And you're going again?

I'm going home because I've had my mother-in-law up there but she's passed away.

Yeah.

And I've got my brother up there you see. So I'd go up and visit him and visit my mother-in-law. And, so I don't know when I'll be going again.

Mmm.

Just went up.

So when did your mother-in-law die?

[Lowers voice.] *About a fortnight ago.*

So that's why you went up?

No that was my brother's 80th birthday and he had all his family there putting on a, a do for him.

Oh.

So I had to go. I just had to go.

Mmm, and you drove.

Mmm. I took ... I've got a sister 87 in the nursing home at [name deleted] Downs.

Mmm.

I took her with me, mmm.

And did she enjoy it?

Fine.

And it went smoothly?

Yes it went smoothly. Yes she thoroughly enjoyed it.

Mmm.

But see we hadn't seen his children for a while and we had a good talk to them so it was quite good. And, the weather was good to us too, you know it was the blustery weekend but I didn't come across any blustery winds. It seemed as though the North West didn't get it until a day or two later.

So it was very windy on Sunday wasn't it?

It was supposed to be windy on Saturday up for the barbecue. We had a lovely sunny day. We came back on Sunday and we were amazed to see the water around central Tassie. There was water lying in the paddocks.

Because it had rained so heavily?

Yes.

Yeah.

And Burnie seemed to be a little later getting it.

Well it rained steadily all day Saturday and heavily all through the night until the early hours.

Well we had, we had sunshine, Saturday up there.

Mmm.

It was supposed to be raining.

[Pause.] So what does home mean to you?

Well, what does it mean? It means a quiet, lonely place where I can sit and please myself what I do. I can watch whatever I want on TV. I can entertain somebody if I want to, but I prefer walking out the door going to something a bit exciting.

Oh.

And then I'm happy to come back because I've had my fun for the day. [Laughs.] I've had my companionship for the day and it doesn't seem so lonely if I've been out.

Mmm.

And had a time with people.

Mmm, yeah, I know exactly what you mean. I feel that way myself.

[Laughs.] Oh good.

Yeah, if you have enough company in your life.

Yes.

It's good to be on your own.

That's right.

And if you have too much it's not so good.

Yes but, I'm fairly lucky that I don't sit down and let the grass grow under my feet and I knew when my husband passed away I couldn't bear thinking I've got no friends and I've got nowhere to go so that's why I've pushed out and pushed myself; walked in among strangers laughing and happy and I'm grieving and trying to make out I've got nothing amiss you know. And, but it was worth it.

To make friends?

Yes it was well worth it to get out and make friends because I needed to know that I could make friends on my own. And I've done that and I've got some nice friends. It's not the same as having a very close friend, which I would like, be it male or female.

Mmm.

Like these friends are lovely friends and we have a lovely time but I couldn't say to any one of them, for different reasons, I couldn't say well ah, let's go down to [name of town deleted], there's something on down there. I haven't got the right to do that because one's in the Mormons', so Sundays she's taken up during the day. We do go out together on a Saturday, to a regular walking group; that particular lady but she minds her grandkids during the week. Otherwise she's a person I would get close to. I could get close to. But she's got no time in her life.

Mmm.

And the new Australian lady's Hungarian and they're very, very independent and you know just, you know I've said to her would you like to come down to Dunalley. She hasn't got a car. She lives in a Housing Department home. Hasn't got any money and I thought; I've said to her would you like to come on Sunday down to Dunalley: "No I've bought some plants yesterday. I want to put 'em in." She's not a person that's looking for company.

Mmm.

And the other one, is a very generous lady, and she's into this and into that and she really hasn't got time, to go. So, I haven't really got anyone that I'm real, real close to.

Mmm.

Except for a single fellow that's hard to get to understand.

Oh.

[Laughs.] *But he's moved very close, but very hard to understand.*

You mean he lives close to you?

No. I mean that, like I went over to do my shift, voluntary, at the office of the Retired Persons on Monday and he turned up and this is what he's been doing. And he says he turned up because I need a bodyguard. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

He never says what I know is in his mind.

That he likes you?

Company, yeah. So...

That's what you mean? He's hard to understand? He doesn't come out and say...

He seems as though he's got to keep his distance but he can't help getting close. [Laughs.]

Has he got a home?

He's single but ...

So what, he's never married?

Never married and I'm trying to get to know him. I've been ... I've known him for eight months but he'll never say anything much except, on my answering machine [laughs]. I've just been talking to my friend about him. He's put on my answering machine: "I love you". [Laughs.]

Oohh.

[Laughing.] *And I said I'm not taking it off. And the lady said well if a fella kissed me I wouldn't wash me face for a week. [Laughing heartily.]*

[Laughing.]

[Laughing heartily still.] *Gees I like her. If somebody kissed me she said I wouldn't wash me face for a week. [Laughing.] But uh, oh he leaves me to read between the lines and he never rings up as a rule but he did on this occasion and I wasn't there. He lives with his sister you see, and she adores him. And he's got a funny way with him. Doesn't like people to know anything about him. I'm not allowed to ring him up there.*

Oh.

Mmm, so anyway [laughing] now you now all about me life.

Heh, heh, heh.

I might have a picture to show you of my friends. I might be able to introduce you, yes, that's the Mormon lady and she's very nice. I'm very fond of her.

Mmm.

In fact I'm fond of them all.

Mmm. Yeah, they look very nice don't they?

Yes.

Bright.

Yes.

Mmm.

And that's her place. And that's the Housing Department. My birthday and she made me, well made a cake. It wasn't for me. It was for us all.

Yeah. The Hungarian lady?

Yes that's the Hungarian lady.

Mmm.

And we have a lovely time. You can see we're a happy group.

Mmm.

And that's my friend. [Laughs.]

Oh yes, yes he does look very sweet doesn't he. And so had you been on a walk? This was on a walk?

Oh no, he took me way up the back blocks where my parents had a farm and it's now a pine forest and we were trying to find that, for an outing on the Sunday.

He looks a bit shy.

Very shy.

So he drives too? He's got a car?

He's got a car, yes.

You can go out with him sometimes, if you ...

Oh he was taking me every Sunday and then all of a sudden he didn't take me. He was sick, but he didn't ring up and say he was sick. [Laughs.] He's like that. You've got to get to know him.

So did you feel let down?

[Tape stops.]

Interviewee 28

How long have you lived here?

Well, sixteen years.

And where did you live before you moved here?

In a unit in Sandy Bay.

And what led to you coming to live here?

Well it was a beautiful unit with a lovely view but it was up a very steep hill and I was nearly in my mid-sixties. I was surrounded by my neighbours in this block of nine units, who were mostly older than I were. Well, and I could see that when they gave up driving they were virtually imprisoned there.

Mmm.

And I thought this isn't a good place to grow older.

Mmm.

So when this became available. Actually it was quite interesting because I belong to the spinners and weavers group, which used to meet at [name of suburb deleted], at the old [name of nursing home deleted]. And one day in November the young guest speaker didn't turn up which meant that the meeting closed much earlier than I expected and I'd seen and advert for this place, which was... It hadn't been occupied. It was only in the process of being built and these two blocks of units, these clusters, were the only completed ones. The bathroom block over there hadn't been built. None of the, the clubhouse was only partially built, but they'd laid out all the gardens round about. It was a beautiful day, a lovely sunny day. The river was sparkling and it was really so lovely and I thought well maybe this is where I should come.

Mmm.

So I followed it up and I decided it was possible and signed up to come here.

Mmm.

I'd signed by the time I'd sold my unit and I'd moved in here it was about April. So it took me about nine months to get the unit.

Mmm.

I was the fifth ... This was the fifth unit to be occupied.

Mmm.

And there were well, all the units along the front had been occupied. Now they're smaller than this unit. This one's suited me very nicely because it's got two bedrooms.

Mmm, it's very roomy isn't it?

Yes. *Want to see around?*

Yeah but, perhaps later, mmm, because of the tape.

The co-house was opened in mid-January. It was opened [inaudible]. The apartment block was opened the following August but the units down on the point there have still not been completed and the F and G blocks they hadn't even been started. Now this continued for quite a long time. It was built originally by the Retirements Benefits Fund².

Mmm.

Who were going into property at that time.

Mmm.

Partly I think because there'd been a bit of a slump in the building industry and it did help to keep the building industry going because Northgate was built at the same time.

Mmm.

They were unfortunate in that, when most of the units were up there was a bad building slump and a lot of, a lot of people wanted to come here but they couldn't sell their own houses

Oh.

So they couldn't come here. So for a long time the place was half occupied.

Mmm, I think that's affected other people too.

Yes, yes, it has.

Yes.

² *Some local references have been retained in this transcript as there is only one such development and it is informative to consider this innovative model specifically.*

But eventually it picked up. I forget how long it took before all these units were filled. Now the original plan was that there'd be other units exactly like this built on the vacant land on the, left side there. This is on a peninsula as you probably realise.

Yeah, so most of them would have a water view.

Yes.

Oh.

A few in the middle there don't; the small ones in the middle but, they're, they're much smaller. There, in all in this type, this area, the first, the first lot of buildings ... There are about seven different villa plans so it suited a lot of people.

So there was a range of sizes and prices?

A range of sizes and prices. Yes, that's right.

So what was the range at the time?

I think from about \$60,000 to \$100,000, no more than that.

Mmm. So it wasn't exorbitant.

It wasn't. It wasn't. No. No. I was able to move here from [name of suburb deleted] without losing much at all. It was about five percent. It was slightly less but by the time I paid my carpet and my curtains and the stamp duty and one thing and another, it was five percent.

Mmm.

So I didn't gain. I didn't lose.

But this place was much more suitable for you as well as the amenity.

Well it was yes. It had the amenities, which I didn't have there. There's the clubrooms and the swimming pool and facilities for barbecues. There are gardens you can use here. Where I was on such a steep hill all we could do was grow a few shrubs and the lawn and, we had to get people to do it because it really wasn't safe. It was such a steep slope.

Mmm.

So this was ... It was a better lifestyle really.

Mmm.

It was much broader.

Mmm.

There's also a lot of company and to begin with there was a really small number of course and we all became very friendly.

Mmm.

A real community, and most of them are still here and it is a real community. When anybody's sick here people rally and help. I had pneumonia a while ago; two years ago and all my neighbours brought me soup and

Mmm.

Food and one thing and another and get milk for me and get, collect my mail; deliver my mail and all that sort of thing. So it really is a good community spirit here. Now after ... it must be about four or five years ago, the Trust was having a big reorganization. They sold Trafalgar. They sold Northgate and then they decided they would sell this, which I think was crazy because it was just beginning to recoup the money.

Mmm, so the Trust?

The Trust.

Or the Trust set up and what's the Trust for?

Retirement Benefits Trust.

Oh. Mmm.

And they have this, because they're, under all the legal business, they weren't allowed to trade. They had a company that did the trading. I can't remember the name of that now to tell you the truth. Anyway they had a man over from Melbourne to advise them and he said sell so they sold to this Australian Retirement Homes.

Mmm.

Which is one of the biggest concerns in the country. They started in Queensland. They're, a branch of a big multi-national, up there. I'm not sure what name is it now but since then they have expanded. They're building more units, which is a good thing and a bad thing. [Laughing.]

Mmm.

That means that the, facilities are more crowded. On the other hand we're getting a lot of younger people in again.

Mmm.

Which means that there, there's more going on than there used to be.

Because, the aim was for 55 plus or 50 plus?

Yes. 55 plus and we had a few people who came originally who were still working but of course they've all got older. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Mmm.

But we have quite a range of activities here. As we've got more people we have a few more office staff and they make arrangements for you know, these social activities and things. They... [getting up] I'll give you an idea of the program that we have. [Noises while she looks for program.] We get one of these once a month. There it is. [Noise as she puts it down.]

Mmm, it's lovely. [Laughs.] Tuesday, scrabble day. Mmm. Claremont shopping? No scrabble.

We have a bus here. It takes people who don't drive down to the village every Monday and Thursday and every Wednesday down to the city and, every other Monday to Northgate and to the library.

Yeah, so when you say that they sold it to, whatever the retirement homes place.

A.R.M.

Australian Retirement?

Homes. A.R.H. I mean, yeah.

What did they sell? Did they sell the units that hadn't been sold yet and the apartments?

They sold the apartments, because we in this lot, we're stratum titled.

Mmm.

But they have the ... And they own the land and the common facilities but they kept the apartment block and the vacant land. And you see we pay when we, under the contract, which is very long and complex [laughs] which the solicitors had to go through. We pay two point five percent of the sale value. When we leave here we have to pay two point five percent per year for the first ten years. So I've been here 16 years. When this place is sold they'll get 25 percent of the, of the value, of the sale price.

Mmm.

That's called the deferred management fee.

Oh right, mmm.

I think most of them have deferred management fees of some sort.

Mmm.

I don't know how they ... The charity ones were started off on a different premise of course ... but I think even they have some sort of deferred management fee now for their independent units, which are not so much the nursing home bit. We don't have a nursing home here you see.

Oh.

We have these units plus the apartment blocks, which is assisted living. You can't be there if you need full nursing care. You can ... They provide meals. They clean the rooms. They do the laundry; and they, when they, when we first came really it was more like a private hotel.

Mmm.

You know, the sort of thing they had at Eastbourne in England. [Laughs.]

[Laughing.] Yes. Some people are very interested in that model apparently.

They were, yes.

I know some people now who are.

Oh yes, they were very interested. They didn't like to cook and they didn't want to do. We have retired schoolteachers who went bush walking and so on. Of course now they're all so much older [laughs].

Mmm. So with the apartments, was it a choice to go in there? You didn't have to be assessed?

I could have gone there if I wanted to, oh yes.

And what difference was there in the cost?

Oh considerable because they're much smaller.

So they were cheaper?

Oh much cheaper.

Mmm.

Much cheaper.

But you've got to pay a fee for the services?

But you pay quite a lot every week.

Mmm.

I think it's over \$200 a week now for all the food that's provided and you know the other ... I don't think they even pay for the electricity because some people use so much more than others but ...

They pay a board?

The pay a board, yes whether it's for power or rates. All we pay is a weekly maintenance fee, which is now \$43 a week.

Mmm.

Which isn't bad when you consider that all the outside maintenance is done. The insurance is done. The gardening is done.

Mmm, the windows are cleaned, that sort of thing?

Well they're supposed to be cleaned once a year [laughs] but ...

Mmm.

Really and truly [laughing] it's a waste of time.

Huh.

Because they're no sooner cleaned and we have a storm and they're just as bad again.

Mmm, they don't look too bad at the moment.

Oh no.

It depends on how the light hits them.

We've had some heavy rain so it's cleaned them.

Mmm, so the apartment buildings, I think that I could tell some people about those who might be interested so ...

I can, I can show you over. I can show you what it's like inside and we can look through the windows. There are two vacant at the moment. One old lady died and the other one moved into a nursing home. Every time they're empty they go in; they paint the place out; they put new carpet down.

Mmm, so it's nice.

But how much they're charging for them now I really don't know.

Mmm.

Mmm, they have a completely different system. Before when they went there they had no deferred management fee but I think, I'm not sure, but about \$60,000 they paid for it but they would get that money back when they left whereas now they've got some sort of deferred management fee and you can pay so much and not get anything back and that's a smaller amount of course but if you, if you expect to be there a long time it's probably the best thing to do. [Laughs.] If you're only going to be there a short time, better to have the other scheme, but I really don't know because I'm not involved.

Mmm, yeah so that one it's, it's not stratum title. It's like paying some sort of a licence.

It's called ... It's not leasehold. It's ... The new units are already sold and I always have arguments. Our stratum titled body corporate has arguments with the owners and tried to get them all stratum titled but we couldn't because they want the leasehold, which gives them more control.

Mmm. Do you think it makes it less attractive to older people if it's only leasehold?

Well they say not because they say you don't have any worry but I don't know that ... [Laughs.] You know, I like to think that I've got my own little patch.

Mmm.

But six of one and half a dozen of the other, that's another thing we, we get regularly or they arrange, if people want to go to any of these shows we let them know and they arrange it and we get little buses or maxi taxis or something.

Mmm.

To take us down as a group.

[Looking at program.] And some of these are booked out?

Oh yes, mmm. She gets about ten tickets; you know they go very quickly.

So the meals are provided on site for the apartments?

For the apartments yes and if we want to go we have to pay for it.

So is there a dining room?

Oh yes, yes.

Or you can have the meals in your room if you want?

Well if you're sick they'll take them but usually ...

But usually you go to the dining room.

They couldn't take them to everybody, they haven't got enough staff.

So have you used the dining room?

Oh, occasionally, very rarely.

Mmm. But do you know many of the people in the apartments?

I used to know them all but I don't know them now because they've turned over so quickly. We, get three church services a month. You know one Catholic, one Anglican, one Ecumenical.

Heh.

And the people come up here and give them a chance, those who don't drove. We have as I say, there's the swimming pool and clubrooms.

Oh, mmm.

I'll take you round and show you.

That'd be good I think to have a look at them. It sounds so, it sounds ...

Well I think it's ideal for a single ... Well there are a lot of couples here too and we, we get sad if we don't have a few men around the place.

[Laughing.]

Because they're very handy.

[Laughing heartily.]

They've got their own workshop and ...

[Laughing heartily.]

I find it hard to get up and change my light bulbs now, being short and not being happy about climbing up things and I just ask and somebody comes and does them.

So you don't have someone on site, who can help you with that?

We have but the boys are so busy. We've got two and a half gardeners, two full-time and one handyman, handymen and so on who are very good but see if they're cutting the grass or doing something with the water down there it's hard to get them to come and do things.

So how many units are there all together?

Well in the original block there were 68 and they're building another 44.

And that's not counting the apartments?

No. There are 42 I think in the apartments.

Mmm. So it's mostly single women here?

No. We've got a ... In this block it is but there was a couple in there and the old gentleman died. There was a couple in the next one and he died. [Name deleted] died. There's a couple below them still there. And there was a couple down here but [name deleted] died last year. So the men [laughing] die off more quickly than the women of course.

Mmm.

And [name deleted] down below, her husband, again there was a couple but he died.

Mmm.

So ...

So couples come in.

Couples come in but it's the women who are left [laughing] bye and bye.

Yeah, so I heard somewhere recently that, the advice that if you don't want to be a widow you should marry a man who's at least seven years younger than you are. [Laughing.]

Well you should, yes. Yeah, people say oh there are so many widows and I say well what do you expect. We live longer and yet the tendency is to marry men who are older than you are.

Mmm. Yes.

When I was a, a, teenager you were scorned if you went out with somebody younger than yourself.

Yes, mmm. It's bizarre isn't it?

Mmm, I reckon it is. Now what can I tell you?

Well, tell me what you like about living here?

Well I love the view of course. It never ... It's always changing. It's ... It's always something to look at. I love the quietness, because you'll notice it's very quiet being on a peninsula. We have no through traffic. It's only our own traffic we have here. We are a private concern, which means we have to maintain all the roads ourselves but the alternative would've been to have had much bigger roads which would be open to everybody to come round.

Mmm, so that's a point that's well worth knowing isn't it.

Isn't it, mmm?

It's a real advantage to have it.

Mmm.

If you're thinking of what's a good way to have housing for older people.

Yes, well I know one of the reasons I was keen to get away from Sandy Bay was I was up near the [name deleted]. You know the [name deleted]?

Right down the end.

Lower Sandy Bay [rest of conversation deleted].

Oh.

And the hoons used to get there in the middle of the night and they'd play their music and the loud music and squealing cars and all that sort of thing.

Mmm and sound tends to travel up.

Tends to travel up yes and I was disturbed quite a lot at night with that,

Mmm.

So the quietness here appealed to me. The more facilities I suppose you know.

Mmm.

I mean here I was able to do a lot. I was able to have a vegetable garden. I was able to entertain, [have] barbecues and so on and the swimming in the pool. I don't do it now because I haven't been so well but well it was really good.

So do you feel safe here?

Yes. Yes and I've travelled a lot. I used to be away most years for several weeks at a time and it didn't worry me leaving this place at all.

Was that to visit children?

[Silence.]

Was that to visit your children?

No, no, well I haven't any children.

Oh you don't.

I've got family up North.

So you're a single person?

Yes. I've got family in the North of the state but I used to enjoy travelling.

Mmm.

And I went to ... I came from England as I told you and I have cousins there

Mmm.

And I used to go and visit them and stay for two or three months at a time.

Mmm. So you could [inaudible].

They came here too, which is why I wanted two bedrooms. I wanted two definite bedrooms. Now some of these other places have one very nice bedroom and then in the front here they have what you call a study, which is a small room actually similar to this except that it would have, like this "L" here, and it has a wall here which meant that there were no cupboards or anything for visitors to put their clothes in.

But it was just like you could sleep there if you had to?

You could, yes, yes. A lot of them have it set up as a bedroom.

Yes so I like that. One bedroom and a study is quite a good compromise.

Yes, yes but as I said my family used to come down and great nieces and so on. The kids would come down and it was handy to have a room with their own cupboards where they were tucked out of the way.

And also plenty of living space for ...

Well yes actually, the, unit down below and this one are the only two in the complex with this size because they adapted it according to the kind of demand see.

And this is lovely. I mean you wouldn't want to take away anything from this view.

No.

Putting a study in.

No.

I don't think, mmm. So these over here have this sort of arrangement do they?

Well their units at the back are the same as the one there, opposite, and they don't have this l-shaped lounge. They have this as a bedroom.

Mmm.

Actually, with cupboards and they don't have the two units, the, the two bedrooms at the back.

Mmm, I much prefer this.

Mmm.

A bigger unit too

Mmm, I did.

And so you've got some sort of heating, some sort of Hydro heat?

Well they've provided us with off-peak heating, which kept ... Well I mean mine went all right because I never had it all that high. Some of them had it on high all the time which was too high for me and when when the time came and I thought, you know they were breaking down all over the place, I

thought before it breaks down I'll get a heat pump because I'm environmentally minded and everybody said heat pumps are the best thing

Mmm.

As far as using power and so on is concerned and it's been quite satisfactory.

Mmm. It's quiet.

Yes and I have it ... I can have the cool, the cooling in the summer and it can get very hot here because we get, I get all the morning sun.

Which is not as hot as the afternoon sun.

No, oh no, better than that but nevertheless it gets very hot.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Mmm. And so is there anything that you don't like about living here?

At first I found it was a fair way out of town but really and truly it's a matter of degree. Provided you can still drive you can be in town almost as quickly as I could from Sandy Bay, taking in not so much the getting there as the parking the car and, and sometimes the traffic lights will stop you going in. I went into town for years when I was working and I know that it took me, I couldn't drive in less than twenty minutes from there mostly. Where do you live?

South Hobart. Yes it takes time to get into town [inaudible].

Here it takes five ... Depending on the traffic lights, because on the Brooker Highway, if you're held up it can be at least another five minutes; 20, 25 minutes to get into town before you start having to park and look for parks and that sort of thing. I usually go to the Melville Street Car Park because it's the first one to go to.

That's where I park.

Mmm.

Mmm, so that's not such an issue for you then as it was.

No, no. If when I ... I had two cataract operations and wasn't able to drive for a while. And then I had to get the bus. Well coming in the little bus from here was handy on a Wednesday but I had to go into town other than a Wednesday. [Very slowly and clearly.]] It takes nearly an hour to get from

Somerdale Road into the city because it goes all around Chigwell, then to Mary's Hope Road and roundabout into Glenorchy. But it's quicker to get down to the Main Road and get the express bus but then that takes quarter of an hour twenty minutes to walk down there or get there and if you get another bus, it takes me, it doesn't ... really you can't get there any quicker.

Yeah so if you have to change, get the bus there and change buses anyway, there's no point.

It gets you there no quicker.

Yeah.

[Inaudible.]

What about? Sorry, you were going to say?

No [inaudible].

So I was going to say what about Glenorchy then? Do you find you use Glenorchy more these days?

Yes I do.

And so it's probably got more things there than it used to have.

Yes. Well it's got Medicare and, all that sort of thing there. And, the library and ...

It's a good library there.

It is a good library.

Yeah, I've got a friend who goes there by choice rather than going into town.

It's a very good library yes and of course here well it's handy. Although they've only really got Woolworth's down the Village but I go into Glenorchy to get more variety in fruit and vegetables and so on. The A-One Fruit Market.

The A-One's fantastic.

Very good, mmm.

Yeah, very good value.

Mmm.

So if there was anything you could change about where you live now what would you like to change. Is there anything that would make it a better place for you to live?

I don't think so.

Mmm. I can't see anything I think it's ... It just seems wonderful; all the things you've said about the extra advantages you have here and also knowing your neighbours. Can you tell me more about your neighbours? I don't know, like particular friends you might have or the sort of things you do with your neighbours?

Oh yes. They're all quite close in this little ... They're, they're arranged round courtyards you see.

Mmm.

There are eight in a courtyard. Now [name deleted] here and [name deleted] were here before me. They were the only two. [Name deleted] has been there right from ... Well that was empty for a while.

This is below you is it?

Down further, beneath [name deleted]. She was a good friend. She has been great. She drives and she drives everybody all over the place and she takes me to the airport when I want to go out and catch a plane [laughs] and all that sort of thing. The [name deleted]'s next door, now they're the second tenants there. The first one was a Dutch lady who went back to Holland.

So next door is where?

Down below.

Oh next door to ...

Yeah, next door to [name deleted]. Over the other side, [name deleted] and [inaudible], immediately opposite behind the trellis there. She's a good friend and neighbour. And, we water each other's plants when we go away and all that sort of thing you know. She's, she was the first occupant there and she's still there. Down below is number thirteen but it's been the most checkered of all. It's had about three different occupations.

Mmm, do you think that it's not quite as nice as some of the others as far as outlook?

No. It's been unlucky.

Mmm.

Unlucky. The first person ... two people have died there and they had one couple there that weren't very happy of didn't really settle and when the husband died the wife left. She died shortly afterwards poor thing. She was an unhappy soul. But the lady, who's there now, is younger than the rest of us so [laughs] we have hopes.

Mmm-mmm, that she'll stay.

Down below we've had two people. The first was an elderly gentleman from Launceston whose family was here and he was quite elderly when he came and then he moved over to the apartment block later and he died. But then the Brooks came and they came. He had been the Director of Adult Ed here and I'd already met them.

Oh.

And oh she they were very, very nice [inaudible] but very sadly he got Alzheimer's.

Oh.

But [name deleted], his old wife, is now 92. And we got along very well until he just got too bad and the old man died. But she's still here.

Mmm.

As I say she's 92 and she manages remarkably well. Although she has limited vision and [laughs] she's not a well person but she's reasonable.

So when you say down below?

Just beneath me, mmm.

And so that is an option for residents here, is to move into the apartments?

Yes, yes and because of her limited vision she doesn't want to go to the apartments because she says she's used to everything here, knows where everything is now and if she went over there she'd be lost. And she has a lot of help. She has meals-on-wheels. She has carers come in. She has her son in [name deleted], but he's a professor and a busy man. And she has another son in England. Sadly she had another son in France but he died last year. But it's still remarkable how well she manages and she's so brave about things. Everybody does what they can to help her, you know.

Mmm.

And she'll ring me and say have you got a minute and I'll say yes and she'll say will you come down and read this letter for me.

Heh.

This sort of thing you know.

Yeah.

So they're real friends.

She doesn't mind asking and you don't mind helping.

Well of course not. No.

So do you spend much time in the courtyard? It looks really pleasant.

Not a lot. Not a lot no and well, it's very hot in the summer and it's [inaudible] up here, which is lovely.

Mmm.

I've got the closed in area and an open area and quite a few of them have the whole lot closed in but I can't think why because I like having the open area. I sit out there on summer evenings and I sometimes, in the winter when the sun is there; I sit there with the morning sun, reading the paper and one thing and another. It's really lovely. I have breakfast out there on a sunny morning.

It's lovely. This must be a bit of a heat sink.

It is. It is. It's cold today, but normally I have this open during the day because if the sun is shining it warms the whole place.

Mmm, mmm. And so what does home mean to you?

Well it's a haven I suppose. [Pause.]

What about home ownership? You said you like to have your own [inaudible].

Well I suppose.

[Laughs.]

I suppose if I'd had no option I'd have taken the leasehold but that was one of the selling points because Tasmanians are slower to cotton onto these sort of things you know and they, I think that was one of the reasons they built in this part of the country.

What, because Tasmanians you said are reluctant to go into the other type of arrangement or?

Well I think they were for a while and also ... when I said I was coming here, people said to me, you're not going to an old people's home.

[Laughs.] Yeah, a lot of people have that idea about things, yes.

Yes. I said I'm not going to an old people's home.

They get nursing homes mixed up with retirement units.

Yes, yes, mmm, yes.

Mmm.

And only the other day a woman said to me, she had friends here who started off in a unit and then they went to the apartment block, but they were both elderly and failing and then you know, in a nursing home.

Mmm.

And she said I don't know why they left Derwent Waters and I said, because they need nursing care. And she said, well can't they get it there? Oh no we can't get it there.

Mmm. Yeah so because it's, yeah what is it, because people aren't very familiar with it I suppose.

Well it was a new concept in a way I suppose to begin with. As I say I think we were the first and there was also down, Redwood, down at Kingston.

Yeah.

Now it was privately owned to begin with and without the resources of the Retirement Fund behind them, they went bust fairly early. And they had a checkered career.

Did they?

Oh yes and the banks took over and, and they, they started off too big because they had a golf course and there's tennis courts and croquet lawn and bowling green. Well it was far too big. They, they just couldn't ... They didn't have enough money behind them to get enough people there to justify it.

Mmm.

Then eventually they sold the clubhouse to the RSL and all the facilities that went with it.

Oh.

They had a really bad trot and then the RSL went bust. [Laughs.]

Oh. [Laughs.] Huh.

I know people who live there and they seem quite happy but they don't have nearly the amenities that we have here now. They had more to begin with but they just weren't viable.

So they can't use them even though they're there?

Well I mean they have to sort of join the club but I don't know what happens now because at one time they could join the RSL Club and use the facilities but it meant it could be let out and they used to have weddings there and functions and they could have loud bands late at night and all this sort of thing. You know it wasn't good if you were very close to the clubhouse.

Mmm, so Derwent Waters was a similar vision and it changed course as well.

Mmm.

It had some difficulties and changed course.

Mmm.

But it's survived.

Yeah.

Truer to the original idea.

Yes, mmm.

And it was smaller scale then was it?

Much smaller scale because there ... I asked ... I went to see Redwood before I came here and I wanted to try them both and they said they hoped eventually to have 400 people there, well I thought, that was too many.

Mmm. So what about dining with your neighbours? Do you ever do that? Do you get together and have meals together.

We used to but they don't, we don't now.

Mmm.

We did. We used to have, have dinner parties and things, you know we'd switch around but as you get older you're less keen to do these things. In fact my outside friends instead of having parties here I'll take them over to the dining room [laughs].

Huh.

Usually lunches these days because people prefer to be out at lunchtime.

Mmm.

So you can book them in the day before.

So that's good.

It is good, mmm.

So it means that they can actually come to what is your home. You don't have to go down to town or anything.

No, no. You can give them a sherry or something before lunch and take them over there for lunch; come back, give them a cup of tea, what have you.

Mmm.

You know it's an easy way to do it.

Mmm. Yeah, so what work did you used to do? You were saying.

I was a, a public servant.

Mmm.

In a way. I was in a nurse. I, I've, I've done many things in my lifetime but I ended up as... I was the supervising sister of the [name deleted] Service.

Mmm.

So I was working from head office but I was responsible for the service throughout the state.

[Conversation deleted.]

Do you find now that you are older that people treat you any differently from how they used to treat you before?

Oh yes I suppose so.

So in what way do they treat you differently?

Well I don't mind being treated like a little old lady.

[Laughs.]

Some people object to it but [laughs] I know I'm a little old lady, so ...

[Laughs.]

People are very ... More considerate I think, on the whole.

Mmm. And so what are the main people then that you have contact with? Do you mean so here [inaudible]?

Well I still go to the [name of organisation deleted] and I was on the executive for years but I don't, I'm not on the executive any longer. I belong to the [name of organisation deleted]. There again I was on the executive but I've, I'm just a general member now and help where I can. I belong to a book discussion group. I go to church. I still belong to the [name deleted] although I do much less than I used to ...

Well what about?

Play bridge a bit.

Mmm.

I never like ... I always can fill my time. I'm never short of things to do.

So what about health professionals, do you have, when you are unwell?

Oh well we have, I have a GP down here, fortunately and if he advises it then I go to specialists he recommends or so on. Like I had my cataracts done. Only a couple of weeks ago I went to have my throat investigated because I've been very croaky for quite a long time and I thought there might be something there but fortunately there wasn't.

Mmm.

Just old age.

Huh.

My muscles getting weak. Now I've got osteoporosis. My dentist said you'd better go to the periodontist. It looks as if I might lose some teeth.

Oh.

Some are loose. But apart from that, I'm glad I can do as much as I can.

Mmm. And so do you miss having younger people living around you? You were saying it's good to get some younger people in and by that you mean ...

Yes.

People like in their fifties.

It hasn't ... It's ... You have more going now with these different things you know the ...

To get out?

To get out, yes. I'm going to Annie. I'm going to go to the, the Cossacks.

So what you are saying is you get out amongst younger people?

Oh yes, we have happy our here that I go to. We have, I go to tai chi and younger people go to that and ...

From outside, who don't live here?

Oh no. Most of them live here. They, you know, they in their early sixties which I regard as younger now.

[Laughs.] Well what about children? Do children visit here?

Only grandchildren and so on. Well I have ... I've got some new great nieces and nephews. They're all up north unfortunately but they range in age from 23 to three months. [Laughs.]

Up North in this state?

All up North in this state, yes.

Mmm.

And I used to go up about four times a year but now I tend to go about two because I won't go up in winter.

You drive up?

I drive up and I don't relish the thought of going on, foggy icy days on the [name deleted] Highway.

Mmm.

But I was up at Christmas. I was up again in May. I'll probably go about September.

And do they come down?

They used to but not so much. Actually the ones with the younger ones do sometimes but the older ones, they're all so busy with this and that, you know.

Mmm.

I've got them from matric to primary school, ten of them all together.

And they have sport on the weekends don't they?

Oh yes. And they, music and swimming and even when I go up there ... Even their grandparents don't see that much of them because they always seem to be so involved with this and that.

Mmm, so do their parents, do they both work for the most part or [inaudible].

Oh one family has their own business and the wife does the books and she's really gone mad since the GST.

Mmm.

It's doubled her work to such an extent. And she has a child at matric, a child at high school and a child at primary school and she tries to do her best to help when she can. [Laughs.] She is very busy. And, another one, her marriage broke up. She works full time so she doesn't have a lot of time. I see them all at Christmas. I always see all of them at Christmas time. When I go up I sometimes see some of them but not all of them you know but ...

But there's a big family get together at Christmas?

Yes.

I suppose as a [name deleted] nurse you've had a lot to do with children in your life.

Yes.

Yeah so you'd, I suppose you'd be like welcoming and enjoying the children.

But all my friends here I mean their children are all grown up now of course and scattered all over the place. I went to a wedding, the son of one of my friends last year. It was in Melbourne. It was very nice.

Mmm.

I'm very grateful for my life. I think I've been very fortunate.

Mmm and you're very fortunate to be living here but that was through your own efforts and ...

Well yes.

But it was good management as well.

Well I think I certainly made the right choice. You know when I first came here there was nothing over there at all. That was an old golf course. And it's now Old Beach.

Oh Old Beach.

Now Old Beach was always there of course but it was further to the left.

And there were more acreages weren't there, not so many houses I think.

Nowhere near. So I say all that lot there. There was nothing there. There was hardly anything up the hill. There were two or three old houses along the Main Road that was all.

Mmm.

And that's in 16 years. It's amazing how it's grown.

Yeah, the population of Tasmania has not changed very much.

I couldn't understand it, you know, the population dropping and all this new housing going up.

[Laughs.]

Because it's growing all around the back of Austin's Ferry there and up the hill.

Yeah, so it's like more people coming to Hobart and places the North West or ...

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 29

[Tape turned on.] [Laughs.] Oh no, not that I know. Oh heavens no!

Anyway we have told the Housing Department that [name deleted] in charge there, up this area, doesn't want to know.

Mmm. But ...

What can I say?

Well but I'll ... Yeah, we'll sort of talk about it a little bit differently

Yeah.

And we'll probably; no doubt we'll get onto that.

Yeah.

How long have you lived here?

Ah, three years.

And where did you ...

Three and a half.

Where did you live before you moved here?

Well I lived in [name deleted] Street, [name of suburb deleted], until I broke my ankle and they stuck me up here in plaster, wheelchair, no shops, no transport.

Oh, how did you manage?

Well me daughter had to come all the way from [name of town deleted].

Oh.

To make sure I had a shower and somethink. My son wasn't living here at the time.

Mmm.

He was at university in Launceston.

Because you couldn't even manage the shower?

No!

Mmm.

No!

You broke your ankle you said?

Really, really bad; I've got a plate in it and screws but when I've been on it a long time I can feel the pressure and the plate, just really, really tight.

Mmm.

Yeah well the Housing Department knew because when I come to look at this place with my daughters, I was gonna to have ... They took me out of the hospital for the day to come up here and have a look at that. My daughter said to them that she thinks it's too far out for a woman like me, being here like I am, no shops around.

Mmm, so how do you shop?

Well, well sometimes when I go ... Because my son only stays here what, he's only allowed to stay here three nights a week and well when I go out of a day I've got to bring some home each time but sometimes my son now will do it for me.

Mmm, so where does your son live?

Here, only, only allowed to stay here three nights a week.

And where does he stay the rest of the time?

With his girlfriend's parents.

Mmm.

Saturday and Sunday.

Mmm.

So he'll be back tonight.

Yeah so Friday, Saturday and Sunday and one other night there and?

Yeah. Well even my daughter down in [name of town deleted] said it's a bit silly when I've moved up here; they should have put a bell. You know a bell?

Yeah. So you ...

Because I fall all the time. I really fall all the time. I have bad falls and they have not got one button, if I was to fall up here I can't, I can't get myself to hospital.

So what happened? Is that how your ankle got broken?

Yeah.

Mmm, because you had a fall, mmm.

Because I just fall. Yeah. Uh ...

What do you like about living here?

Well [sighs] I don't really. It's too far away from the shops. The bus service of a Sunday if you want to go to church, the first bus up here is eleven o'clock.

Mmm.

And I don't like the people up here because they fight. They sell drugs and I don't think a woman of my age should be up here with, amongst all those people. And [lowering voice to a whisper] the people in that house there are [with emphasis] schizophrenic!

Mmm.

One moment they're good and the next day they're likely to attack you.

Mmm, this one, right next to you?

Yeah. But I'm I've got no way, if anything happens here you've got nobody here to help you.

Mmm. So you've got no neighbours you can call on for help?

Not really. Nobody.

Mmm. That's not always the way in public housing areas though. Sometimes there are good neighbours aren't there, that help each other?

Yeah.

But it's just not the way here ...

There is one across the road there but sometimes she's, she's good and sometimes she's not. She can be a funny person too and then this guy up here, he is really, really bad, really bad.

In what way?

Well he's the one that ...'ll just ... He's the one that was up here last year for hitting his dog, over the shovel, over the head with a shovel.

Mmm.

Is that just next-door here?

That house just there in front of me. And he sells dope and stuff. The police, they raid his house. They take the stuff away but he comes back and then he gets out there boasting but it's not too bad now because it's not summer. That's when all the trouble seems to start, at summer time.

Mmm.

And my daughter used to, from [name of town deleted], used to come up here all the time to stay up here with me, like try to stay one night a week but she won't now.

Why would that be?

Because of the people around here and your cars are not safe here. They get at [inaudible].

So this is why you wanted me to bring mine in?

Yeah.

Yeah. So how many bedrooms have you got?

Two.

Mmm but you've got either your son or your daughter would stay in the second one?

No it's my son's bedroom. I used to just give my bedroom up and sleep on the couch.

For your daughter?

Mmm.

And she let you do that?

Yeah, she didn't mind. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

She used to fight though but in the end I used to win.

Mmm. And so, there's a lot you don't like about living here. So can you tell me what you don't, anything more about what you don't like about living here?

It's too far away from the shops. The buses are horrible of a weekend. On weekdays is not too bad, but it's just the people.

Mmm.

Around here.

So what do you do then, during the day?

Well what I do is just [laughs] I go to the [name of charity deleted] and volunteer there for two days to get away from here. And I go to the Fifty and Better Centre, to get away from up here, at least, and when I come home I, I lock myself in with the chains. I've got two chains there and a chain there because once when I was in bed a young kid walked into my kitchen.

Mmm.

He has got the keys to the units.

Mmm. How can he ...

I don't know where he's living now.

The keys to the units or?

Yes the keys to all the places because what made me realise this, I lock my deadlock from the inside, never on the outside. My son went away to Coles Bay and I was in bed at about two o'clock I heard something in my kitchen and of course I had the cat there and I said oh go get him boy, because I thought it was my son got back from Coles Bay and next minute I heard the door shut and locked from the outside. When I got up I thought nothing more of it. I went to put my clothes out on the line in the afternoon. I couldn't open it from the inside so then I realised that it had been deadlocked from the outside.

Mmm.

So [breathless] I, I put the washing machine up against the door. I put another old lounge suite I had against the door and I hopped on the bus and went to [town where daughter lives deleted].

Mmm.

And so I rang up and in the meantime my son come home. He thought, oh Mum's gone mad, for having the washing machine against the door and the lounge chair and I left a note on the table explaining what had happened.

Mmm.

So I rang up the Housing Department the next day from [name of town deleted]. I said I'm not going back until my doors have been changed. And they turned around and they said to me, look when anybody moves out the locks are changed, but they're not.

Mmm.

So in the meantime they had said to me is anybody be at home two o'clock that afternoon and I said yeah, my son. They come right on two thirty

Mmm.

And changed the locks.

Mmm. So how long ago was that?

Only last year.

That was pretty decent of them then wasn't it? [Inaudible.]

Yeah but with a moan ... All right to me but no, a moan to my son.

Well if they're gonna do it they're gonna do it. A moan doesn't seem right, yeah.

Yeah, but ...

Mmm, so ...

The place gets really, really damp here.

I was gonna ask, yes

Have a look at this. Look at all this.

Oh yeah.

And this is the hottest room!

Mmm.

With that!

Yeah.

You should see in my son's room.

So do you have your windows open much?

Yes. I've just closed them today because it's cold. They've put a heater in me son's room because my son went to the doctor's for chest problems. Since he's been here he's had nothing but chest problems.

Mmm.

So the doctor said to him you've got every right to sue the Housing Department. So the doctor must've talked to the Housing Department. They put a heater in his room but you should see his room.

Mmm.

It's all mouldy.

Mmm.

Even to the top of the wardrobe.

So where's his room?

Up the passage and in there and when I moved in here they didn't even paint the house.

Mmm.

I've got to wait ten years.

Mmm, and there's knocks and chips and ...

Yep.

Mmm.

That was like that when I come here.

Mmm.

And I said to them it hasn't been painted from the last time the people moved out. They just said oh no, you've got to wait ten years to be painted.

Mmm. Ten years is a long time.

This is a good day up here today.

Mmm.

Usually lady across the road, she's in for transfer, like I am.

Oh so you're in for transfer?

Yeah. I've been on the waiting list 12 months.

Mmm.

But they keep saying oh there's no houses. Nobody wants to move.

Mmm.

And the lady up here, across the road here, somebody rang up to swap and as soon as they know you live off [name deleted] Crescent, they don't want to come up here.

Yeah so for you to get a move you've got to have someone who can come here?

Yeah.

So well ...

And then you got, in the summer time you've got the kids running around early morning, till three o'clock in the morning. The parents don't care.

Mmm.

And then you've got to listen to the screaming all day and half the night and [close to tears] then it'll start up again. [Lowering voice.] The little boy next door, that needs? kid, spits in my granddaughter's face when she was four and every time she comes up here she screams.

Mmm, mmm.

Because she remembers that little boy spitting in her face.

Mmm. They live at [name of town deleted]?

My daughter does. I've got two who lives down here. I've got two lots that live at the back of [name deleted], in [name of suburb deleted].

Oh. So [indicating a photo] these ones where do they live?

Those ones there. That's them up there. They're in [name of town deleted].

They're lovely.

Yep. These ones here now, they're [name of suburb deleted], these two.

Oh.

She's 15 now. He's 13.

And what age are the others?

Nearly 12 and the girl is going on seven.

Oh, so when you first moved in it was three years ago.

Yup.

You've got four grandchildren, two girls and two boys.

Mmm. It'd be all right. I wouldn't mind living up here if they had a shop and if they had a shop up here, people, they would make the money. You see a lot of people ... To go, for me to go to the shop and there's no buses running you've got to go in a taxi and it's about \$11 they charge you just down and back. They put their own prices on it.

You don't know anyone you could get a lift with, around here?

[Almost in a whisper.] *No, [raising voice] not around here.*

[Conversation deleted.]

That's no good, well we'd better get back onto the housing.

Yeah. [Laughs.] That's the reason I go out of a day, just to give meself a break from up here.

And so what, I mean, what does home mean to you? Is this your home?

Well home is to me, is where you should be able to come in, sit down. That's my son's TV by the way. He sits up there. I sit there.

[Laughs.]

Well home is to me, is where I should have my privacy. Shouldn't have to put up with screaming kids whose mother doesn't control them and I should not have to lock myself in. I don't know how you feel.

In order to feel safe?

To feel safe I've got to lock myself in here.

So this is not your idea of home really?

[Softly] *No. My blood pressure, since I've been up here, my blood pressure has been sky high day in ... and my doctor is by the way, if you, he'll confirm this. His name's [name deleted], at [name of suburb deleted]. I've been under him 22 years and he'll tell you since I've been up here my blood pressure is out of control. They can't stop it and, and I'm heading for a stroke, since I've been up here in this neighbourhood. And that is why I'm in for a transfer.*

So are you on medication?

Well I've got ... I am on blood pressure tablets but they're sky high and they're too strong and when I take them I forget things and all I want is my bed. They are really, really strong.

Oh.

Really strong. So I just try and control it myself.

Mmm. How do you do that?

Well just try and ... It's not so bad since I had the cat.

So it's more like you try to ... It's the stress you think?

It is stress, yup.

So you try not to be stressed?

Yup.

Mmm, so you've got a doctor's letter with your transfer have you?

Yes.

But for you to go they would not be happy unless there was someone willing to come in here?
Has this got to be a swap?

No, no, no. I'm not on a swap. They wanted me to but nobody will come up this area. No I'm in for a swap. I've been on the list for 12 months.

So you could just get a transfer to somewhere else?

I lived at [name of suburb deleted] for 23 years in Housing Department and I never had one argument with any of my neighbours.

That's a more settled area isn't it?

Yeah and I had a woman just up around the corner who I went to school with and she was, used to come down and keep me company of a day, but here I'm too scared to get anybody coming and visiting here because soon as they know you've got somebody here they usually carry on.

Mmm.

And ...

And what sort of things would they do?

Well like just get out there and scream and the fences are not very high for a start because everybody can see in everybody's back yard. Even the Council will tell you the fences are not very high.

Mmm. Yeah, a lovely puss.

Yeah, I've just got him fixed up.

Mmm.

You're very privileged because every time a stranger 'll come in here he'll either run or hide.

Huh, he must know I'm a cat person.

Are you?

Well I've got, I've got three cats. So do you find that now you're older, people treat you differently?

Yes.

Can you tell me more?

You wouldn't know but I seem to, like the lady next door, she said to me in her good days she said to this person, these people around here, this woman not, shouldn't have to put up with what's going on around here in her, in her age and yet she's just as bad.

How do you mean?

[Whispers] *she's schizophrenic.*

Oh that one.

Yeah, and she used to help me.

So she's all right sometimes but ...

Yes but I haven't spoken to her about six months because she went to bed and dreamt that I said in her dream that the bloke across the road was going to strangle her. So what did she do? I was in [name of town deleted], went to [name of town deleted] that weekend. That afternoon she went over to the lady I went to school with over here. We went to [name deleted]. She went and said I believe your son's going to strangle me. And this lady across the road said no, who said that and she said I did. Me? And I was at [name of town deleted] because uh ...

So there's over here, you went to school with?

Yeah.

But you're not; you're not talking to her now?

No I talk to her because she realises that she shouldn't have listened to a person as silly as a schizo.

Mmm.

I said they're all very funny around here.

Mmm.

You see [name deleted] takes me in to work of a weekday but I take her little girl into the playgroup near the centre.

Oh.

But see one day she could be really nice and tomorrow she can be funny with me.

Is this the one you went to school with?

There's [name deleted] across the road in the white house and then next door to her there's this other Sue that I went to [name of school deleted] with.

So you do get, you get a lift down to the Centre on the days that you go or the day you go and to the [name of charity deleted] or you?

Mmm.

Well that's not too bad.

On one condition, that I take her little girl to playgroup but then she can be very funny as well, very funny.

What she just drops you at the street?

Yeah.

And you take her little girl to the place?

Yep.

Near the Fifty and Better Centre?

Yep. Well I find I'm getting on much better here, not talking to anybody around here but when I seem to talk to people around here they have fights with people and they sort of drag you into it.

Mmm.

Whether you're here or you're not.

Mmm.

Oh I'm just not trying, just trying not to take my blood pressure tablets. I'm just trying to control myself.

Mmm. You know what your blood pressure is?

I haven't been since Friday but it was really, really high.

Mmm.

Really high and it's got worse too since my son's been here because [laughs] he's not much help either.

Mmm. So you must have some thoughts about, what sort of place you'd like to live in.

Well I suggested I wouldn't mind going up to when they start building them, Windsor Court,

Mmm.

Because that's up in the area I'd like to go to. Because that way when they start building them well I'm in the middle of [name of charity deleted] and the Fifty and Better Centre.

Mmm.

I'd just have to walk.

Mmm.

Because I like getting up and walking, but here, I don't feel safe around here.

[Conversation deleted.]

Mmm, mmm. I guess from their point of view there are a lot of people in your situation or worse, aren't there.

Yup, but I am going to suggest to them next week if, because I'm here a lot on my own and I have some very bad falls, if they can put a bell in somewhere.

That sounds like an excellent idea, yeah.

Yep. Oh puss. [Inaudible.] If anything happened ...

You'd also ...

My poor old cat used to, not only me, my poor old cat used to get bashed up that much.

How?

Oh other cats and that used to bash him up and I felt so sorry for him but then he got sick of it and he started fighting back so I thought the only way I could control him was to get him desexed and you don't, he's such a different person now.

You'd want to keep him in then wouldn't because if there were other undesexed cats out there ...

Well I had him from ... Because I had a dog here and my dog was in, was here at the right time, in the right place but the wrong time. They poisoned him.

Up here?

My daughter in [name of town deleted] gave me a dog, thinking oh that'd be good company.

What sort of dog was it?

Little Jack Russell with crossed by Red Heeler.

Oh.

And he was so good. He'd let you know if anybody was around and because these people and that guy down there, they used to ran around of a night.

Mmm.

All hours of the night and the dog used to let us know somebody was out there. So I went out there one day trying to calm him down.

Mmm.

And I heard them say oh that dog has to go and the next minute I got so upset I told me daughter in [name of town deleted] and she said look, because I thought the dog was getting poisoned slowly.

Mmm, so how did you know? What happened?

Well my daughter said well, she come up here the next day and the dog was really sick and she took it to the Dogs' Home to get the vet to look at it and he said we'll keep it here and we'll watch him for a couple of days.

Mmm.

So then in the meantime he died. He was poisoned.

Did you find out what sort of poison it was?

No. All I know that it was poison because they gave me this number and every time I had to ring up I had to quote this number and they said that they really couldn't tell me much what the poison was.

But they concluded that the dog had ...

Yeah, so the lady across the road gave me that when it was a kitten. It was about six weeks old

Mmm.

And I got so over protective I wouldn't let it out.

Mmm.

And it's only just starting to go out.

Mmm.

It's spoiled. [Name deleted]'s good. [Name deleted] said to me, because apparently she they'd been to the Housing Department about this [name deleted], this [name deleted] and the carryings on over here and she said to me.

That's right near them too isn't it?

Yeah and she said to me don't worry. She said I wouldn't move she said, because there's big changes coming.

Mmm.

Because they'd get it just as much as I would but the trouble is the fences are so small.

So when did she say about the changes?

About a couple of ... About a month or so ago when I was coming home on the bus with her.

Mmm. I don't know anything about that. So is this a gas heater or electric?

No electric. I've got it on low

Mmm.

For the cat.

And is that cheap, is that cheap to run?

Well, see I don't really know because Centrelink pays my Hydro.

How come?

They pay \$50 a fortnight out of me pension towards me bills so when the Hydro comes in I might only have to pay \$50 or last one I got I was \$4.25 cents in arrears.

Oh, oh. I don't understand that. So the cat sits on the cushion does it, in front of the heater?

Yeah.

Yeah. So and what, do you pay your rent out of your pension too or?

Yes the pay it too. Yup.

So you just know whatever you've got left is not spoken for?

I pay me phone bill meself.

Oh, mmm.

Well I'm starting, before I used to pay the, the phone, the Hydro, the rent, the food and now my son, because he was on apprenticeship, builder's apprenticeship and he got off the apprenticeship and he went to work with [name deleted] or something.

Mmm.

He's working at the [name deleted]. He's on good money so he buys the food now.

Oh, mmm.

Because he used to give me money and he'd say to me you pay the phone bill and I'll pay for the food

Oh.

And without him there's still things I couldn't manage

Yeah.

Because if I lived up here on my own and I could, so I was thinking about going to the Housing Department and see if they could at least put a bell somewhere if I fall.

Yeah. I think it's a very good idea.

My daughter was the one, in [name of town deleted], suggested it.

So you've got three children then?

Yeah.

Yeah.

I've got two girls and a boy and one daughter works at [name deleted].

And is that the one who lives [name deleted]?

Yup, and she's also in her third year in Law School.

Mmm, that's wonderful.

And plus bringing up two teenage kids on her own.

Mmm.

My daughter down in [name of town deleted], she'd do anything for you.

Mmm. Her children look lovely.

Yup.

They're all quite similar in fact, the little girls especially.

Yup. That one up there, that's [name deleted].

Mmm

[Conversation deleted.]

Mmm, but the house itself, I mean that's fine isn't it?

Well if they'd paint it.

Plenty of living area isn't there.

I bought this [referring to the lounge] .

It's a good-sized living area.

I bought this off Bennett's for \$350. They threw that chair in.

Fantastic. It's woollen isn't it?

Yes, yeah. This chair they threw in doesn't go with it. It's a rocking chair.

How come?

I sat on it.

Was it a special or?

No. Just thrown in, probably been up there for a while. I sat on it. I went right back. It's not going to do it on me now.

You went over?

No.

Oh, so where's Bennett's?

Grove Road, Glenorchy.

Oh yeah. It's a fantastic lounge.

Because this here, they wouldn't have known because it's got no handle on it and I was sitting here once ... That would have come in handy to me when I was in plaster.

So how long have you had it?

About a couple of months.

Mmm.

They delivered it and they set it up for me.

It's very, very nice.

And that's my son's area and that's mine.

[Laughs.]

Because he watches different stuff to me.

And you can both watch at the same time in here?

He plays his Play Station too. I've got a Play Station one over there but that's not for me. That's for the kids when they come.

So how old's your son?

Thirty.

Oh.

[Whispers.] *And his girlfriend thinks he's 23.*

Oh.

Because he looks very young.

[Conversation deleted.]

No, well, see we've been to the Housing Department about the stuff that's going on up here.

Mmm.

I've had the lady across the road, [name deleted]. I had the woman up across there who come and asked me one day would I go to the Housing Department with her and verify what's going on here but [name deleted], you see I don't know her other name. She's only young.

Mmm.

She said she's not interested in what's going on up here.

Mmm.

Not interested.

Mmm.

And every second night up here there was a fight.

Mmm. Are they still happening?

Yeah in the summertime because the alcohol will be, will be up; this guy here, every time I have a light on my verandah, because sometimes of a night in the summer I like to go out there and put my clothes on the line of a night.

Mmm.

So my light bulbs disappear. And my clothes, my clothes, my son's clothes, got cut.

Mmm.

With scissors. This guy's mate, where this woman next to me has got a Restraining Order for three years on this guy.

Mmm.

And so his mate jumped the fence and come to my clothesline, cut up my clothes with scissors instead of going to hers and I never went to the police or anything. My daughter reckons I should've.

Mmm.

But I thought no, if it happens again I will.

Mmm.

Now you know why I like going out and volunteering because I mainly only stay here Mondays and Fridays.

Yeah. Yes so you must have made a few friends at [name of organisation deleted] and [name of organisation deleted].

Yeah, I've been there ten years.

That's a long time.

In October, I get my ten-year medal from the [name of organisation deleted] but I've only been in the [name of organisation deleted]; be 12 months in November.

Mmm, mmm. That'd be good too I suppose in time.

[Conversation deleted.]

It was a good help it was, to help me bring my blood pressure down. If I feel stressed I just go and pat him and play with him.

Mmm.

Coffee?

Yeah.

[Pause to get coffee.]

I'll just have no milk.

That one.

Yeah.

Came up ... Oh no Chicken Feed.

Chicken Feed is amazing.

Yeah. Now did you read this? That's not turned on still is it?

Ok, I'll turn it off. [Turns tape off.]

[Turns tape on again.] ... things that happen in the summer time?

They get out there and they scream. They fight. They have their parties.

Out in the cul de sac here or ...

One out in his yard here.

Mmm.

Him and his mates 'll get out here and they'll scream to this guy there.

Mmm.

Fighting.

Ah.

And then this one here will start fighting with the guy next and then his, the guy next door's son took to this guy, went to stab him with a knife and he's only what, twelve; twelve thirteen.

Mmm.

And I went to hang my clothes out one night and I heard this noise from the bush here and I couldn't see anybody and I heard this voice say get inside, you're going to be hurt because apparently they had Saunders Crescent shut off one night from there to there and the snipers all went into here, to this guy.

Oh.

Because just after the eleventh of September.

Mmm.

With America, he got out there, 'cos he's dark and he's got a beard, and he wrapped his thing around his head and he threatened everybody he was going to shoot them.

Oh.

And because then the cops all took, took him away and then within the next day he's back again.

Oh.

And then these two fight because this one sells drugs, he sells drugs and somebody's getting a bit more than this one. This one here had writing on his front door, about pay up your drug money or you're dead.

Mmm.

And on his back door it had "child molesterer" and "child molesters will die" and they painted all his front door, all his back door, his car. You can still see his car's still got a bit of graffiti on it.

Mmm.

And, 'cos my grandson stayed up here one day and he walked down there and he found this petrol cap from his motor bike got sprayed and he bought it up here and I just said look ... He said, "Can I keep this. I found it." I said, look I don't know [name deleted], you'll have to ask your mother and of course his mother didn't know what it was and so then he took it home and this guy yelled out and said to me, "Oh if you know anybody who's got, found a petrol cap of my motor bike. Oh if you find a petrol cap it's off my motorbike and I said "Oh [name deleted] I said my grandson went down there the other night and he found this cap or something." And he said "Oh all right. If you see him can you ask him if he can return it?" Cos he said "Oh that'll save me \$500" or \$100 or something and I said oh yes. So I rang up [name deleted] and told, asked her to ask [name deleted] if he still had the petrol cap

Oh.

And she said yes, she said well [name deleted] didn't know what it was do he asked me if he could keep it and I said well 'pparently it belonged to [name deleted]'s house, his motorbike.

Mmm.

Because when they did his house over inside and outside they took his petrol cap off his motorbike and through it and then straight away because [grandson's name deleted] found it, [grandson's name deleted] had it, [grandson's name deleted] was supposed to have been involved with it.

Huh.

And ...

Perhaps he wanted to blame someone.

So I said to [grandson's name deleted], look next time you see anything on the ground will you just leave it.

Mmm.

Just leave it. Don't touch it.

Mmm. Anywhere else it might be safe, but not up here.

Yeah, oh no. And I still say somebody's going to get either shot ... Yeah, me and my son, we have sat up here one Saturday night watching TV and we've heard gunshots, down at ... Coming from this area and yet nobody does anything.

Mmm.

But it's, I feel so sorry for [name deleted].

Yeah.

Because she'd get all of this, because she said once she had to come over and get [name deleted] and take her down to her house. That's that [name of the man who owns the motor bike deleted]'s little girl.

What happened? How old is she?

Must be seven.

Yeah. And [name deleted] is the guy who lives just across here?

And why did she have to do that?

Because, because [name deleted] goes off.

Oh.

He really, really goes off.

Mmm and has, has he got a partner, female partner?

No his wife, ex-wife lives up here round here, bought a house round here somewhere.

So the little girl lives with him?

Yeah.

Oh dear. Just on her own?

And she's told people she's been sexually abused but she won't say who has done it to her, because it's like in here sometimes looks after the little girl to give him a break.

Oh.

Because the little girl talks to [name deleted]. Nobody knows ... The Housing Department know what's gone on but they're just sort of, just not interested.

Mmm.

And this bloke here told this one here, if you here any guns firing get into your corner because I can't stop you. I can't save you.

What did he mean by that?

It means if he starts going off and starts firing bullets and he's told people up here ...

This guy?

Yeah. And he's told here, that they've two torpedoes. Is that how you say it?

Mmm.

Is pointing at her house.

Mmm.

And they're going to get two for the price of one.

Mmm, mmm. Why wouldn't ... Mmm.

Now tell me is that normal people and I won't even have my grandkids up here anymore, I'm just so gonna, just so scared that something's going to happen.

Mmm. So do you visit them at their place now?

No I go to [name of town deleted].

Mmm.

Yup.

Do you see the other ones down at [name of town deleted], the [name of suburb deleted] ones?

[Conversation deleted.]

And visit 'em down there. I won't have them up here because you never know what happens up this way.

Mmm, yeah. I hadn't realised how bad it was until I heard [name deleted] talking at the, the Welcome Inn public meeting.

Yeah.

Because when someone suggested that that site might become something like [name deleted] Crescent [laughs].

Yeah.

And she put her hand up and said excuse me, I live there and [laughs] ...

Yeah.

Mmm, and talked about some of the problems.

Well when I used to do Meals-on-Wheels up here, I said I'd come up here and I used to go over there and see [name deleted] before she died.

This is when public housing was here then?

Oh yes and she used to go, we used to do Meals-on-Wheels and then when I moved, first moved in here this guy here [name deleted] used to scream at [name deleted] all the time when he seen her. She, that woman before she died was so scared to sit up there at the bus stop on her own. She used to beg people to go up there and sit with her until she was on the bus.

Oh.

And that's not fair.

But why did he scream at her?

Because ... I would not have a clue and then when the cops come and they found her body, somebody walked in one day, her relations, and found [name deleted]'s body in bed. He turned around and he said, yelled out to the cops, "Huh, one gone, three more to go".

And what did he mean by that?

Because these people have all went, has put in to the RSPCA about the way he was bashing his dog.

Oh.

So she was, he was screaming at her, knowing she wasn't well and then he yelled out to the police that was taking fingerprints around the letterboxes, he yelled out, "Huh, one gone,

Mmm.

Three more, or two more to go", and the cops said to the policewoman [rude sign] to him.

Mmm, mmm.

Yup so I suppose it was better coming up here because they were going to put me in Stainforth Court.

Mmm.

And what stopped me going there [laughs] too bad, I was in a wheelchair, no downstairs.

[Laughs.]

And I wouldn't go there at any rate.

Mmm, well what do you know about Stainforth?

It's not how bad the place is. It's right near the cemetery.

Oh right.

I think it's creepy here by the bush, but living next to the cemetery ...

Oh.

But I have put in, for either West Hobart, Hobart, North Hobart and those Windsor Courts, if they ever pass and get built, I wouldn't mind going out there because they reckon they're, they're going to put the old people with disabilities. Well my leg won't be a hundred percent better anymore.

Mmm.

Before I used to get round and run and now I can't. I can't even get up on a chair to wash my son's roof where it's mouldy so I have to wait for my daughter to come, to get up there.

Mmm.

[Conversation deleted.]

So I think I really, really going to see the Housing Department in the morning about putting a bell somewhere in case I have a bad fall because I fall all the time because it's my blood pressure. It makes me really, really dizzy.

Mmm.

And that's when I fall.

Mmm. If you fixed that problem you'd probably be ...

Well safe too.

Mmm, mmm.

But see how beautiful and quiet ... You'd think it's so peaceful you wouldn't think it was trouble.

Well from what you've told me, I'm looking out there and you know I'm a bit worried with what I see, particularly from what you've told me.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Well there's plenty of people around here will verify what I told you is true.

Mmm.

Because [name deleted] on the corner up here she has been to the Housing Department. They have told her not to get the tenants upset because she was going to get ... She was going to get her, [name deleted], me and a couple of others to go to the Housing Department and tell them we want changes made with these people. And as I said to the Housing Department, there's only three people up here that really, really worry me. That's him, him and [name deleted].

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 30

How long have you lived here?

Here in this unit?

Yes.

Just over a year now.

Mmm. That's a fair time. And where did you live before you moved here?

For most of my life, my married life I've lived in houses that I've owned. And then it became totally, absolutely impractical for me to live there anymore. I was losing; I couldn't maintain the house. I couldn't find monies to keep up the upkeep, to upkeep the house. Things were going to, deteriorating and I know that my house was losing value over the years that it wasn't done.

Mmm. And, what do you like about living here?

Living here, I like the community spirit because I'm living in a disabled unit in a block of six units and we've managed to achieve a community feeling within the units. And I like the feeling of safeness. I like the friendship, I like that fact that the housing is assured, that if something goes wrong that it will be fixed. For example the heating and or you know if major things go wrong with the house that it will in fact be done for me and I haven't got to try and find that out of my pension.

Mmm.

Yes, I, I feel that in a lo ... in many ways I wish that I'd applied or tried to apply to live in this accommodation because suddenly I felt free and I didn't feel trapped in the situation that was overwhelming me, to try and put a roof over my head but of course I had children for most of those years. Mmm.

So can you tell me about that again, about the struggle to keep a roof over your head?

It was a nightmare. It was an absolute nightmare because I've been a single parent for 30 odd years, for 34 years, and I was all ... at the beginning I was in a new country and the struggle has been overwhelming but I didn't really know my full rights but I found to have accommodation for my children that was taking probably three quarters of my pension money in rental and which left very little for foods and so forth and we had an issue of maintenance laws not protecting the children of

these, these marriages and so consequently I was trying to survive on the pension on very, very low income and it caused enormous poverty issues.

Mmm. So, you're saying that the maintenance laws didn't enable your children to be supported, at the time?

Absolutely, absolutely and I've done research in this particular issue, on maintenance issues with the government because even today in 2005 those issues are still not maintained and still not, and the children of, of divorced or separated couples are still not adequately supplied... cared for with money to supply to help those children.

Mmm.

And what it eventually ended up doing is that because the maintenance hadn't arrived for example, I was maintaining the lot of us, five of us out of one pension.

Mmm.

And many, many times we were without food.

Mmm.

Well the children had food but I can guarantee I didn't.

Mmm.

Mmm. And the poverty issue is something that is very strong in my head and in fact I worked with [names deleted] and did platforms on the poverty issue. On the issue, because of the amount of money that was taken for example for rents, which left no monies literally for things like clothing or kids', kids' you know if they went on a holiday, if they went on excursion at school, we very rarely had extra monies to supply for that, so consequently the kids were denied many things lots of times and that created an issue within the mother-daughter, children-children, and ... feeling that we were just not helping them but there was simply no money to do it on.

Mmm. But you managed to get into home ownership.

I did. I did. But if I could, I, sometimes I even think back and think how on earth did I do it. But I can tell you that from a very small deposit and through working for example doing my own painting, decorating and upgrading of the house, which I then sold on and made a profit and that profit I immediately put in back to, put into a better property and then from there, that continued until I was able to buy my house outright. And but that took years and years of us living in properties that were being done up or in the process of being done up and but I can guarantee now, with the cost of living

and the cost of housing now I could never ever afford to live in a house that I was, that I had bought now. I just simply wouldn't do it and also what is happening in our town, in [name of town deleted] Tasmania, is that the rentals have become so appallingly high that it's a wonder that anyone can afford it, even with housing assistance, or rental assistance, they're still paying most of their wages in rent and then when you take into consideration basic needs, I can tell you that most people are struggling, and struggling very badly.

Mmm. And so, did you get rental assistance when you were renting houses.

I've only ever rented recently, in the last couple of years.

Oh.

So yes I did get some rent assistance at that stage but if I can give you a quote on one house in particular that I was paying \$100a week just a year and a half ago that is now rented out at \$250 a week. I have to question how this has gone out of hand to such a degree. What persons or how many people could afford to in fact pay that type of money?

Mmm.

And yes I did get rent assistance but in honesty it did not help that much because if they're charging you a hundred and fifty dollars rent and you're getting \$35 for your house assistance or whatever they deem is correct for you, it is still more than you can afford to pay out of your pension.

Mmm. Yes so when you're children were little, did you rent then though?

Yes I did. Many years, well 30, 30 odd years ago. I was only in this country three months when my husband and I separated and I managed to rent a house and go to work and there was no such thing ... I was renting a house. I wasn't in any situation where I was eligible for rent allowance or whatever because I was working at the time but that almost crucified us because I was having to leave my house at 5 am in the morning to get my children to childcare and then get from my house in Warrandyte in Victoria to South Melbourne in Victoria to my job and by the time I got home at seven o'clock at night I was so totally exhausted it was feed the kids, go to bed and get up for the next morning but there was no rent assistance and I didn't even realise at that stage until I was told many months later that I could probably get a hel ... pension to help me with my children.

Mmm. A part pension?

No I got a full pension because I didn't work after that.

Mmm.

Because my children were very little, only 14 months and two years of age.

So initially you, you just supported them by working.

Yes, yes I did but without any ... Even though there was maintenance allow ... awarded to us which was a pittance of \$11 a week I can, I know for example we never got any maintenance for years and years and years, none at all.

What year are you talking about, at the time you left your first husband?

Around the sixties to seventies, something similar. Yeah and I, I can tell you, I don't wish to sound pathetic but I can tell you that I have never bought a new outfit in all my life.

Mmm.

I and but I don't have a problem with that because I consider myself an elegant person and I know I don't, I'm not too proud to wear you know second hand clothes from op shops and things but you, you learn a way of supporting yourself and your children through this very difficult time and believe me it was difficult.

Mmm. So you're saying clothing is one area where you could make savings?

Yes. Yeah, clothing and of course I didn't smoke and I didn't drink. There were many things I didn't do at all and, very rarely ever went out but I think it's a case of prioritising and learning to do what you can. It's surprising how many things you can do with; with mince meat for example and, you know. And I, I remember that through my work and working also with other disadvantaged people we were able to help each other, in you know just supporting each other through these issues and yeah, and caring for each other. That's one, another way we got through. But with regard to housing I can remember a strange feeling when I moved into this house that I'm in here, which is a Housing Co..., Housing Tasmania property, was the enormous relief and how my heart thought, why in God's name didn't somebody offer me one of these houses all those years ago.

Mmm.

Because I was a single mum for many years and I also fostered 28 children and within that period of time my life could have been made a lot easier had I had the protection, as I consider it, of a Housing property, mmm instead of private, private property. Mmm.

Mmm, and so in those years when you were providing housing for your children, was it, was there some insecurity around that? I mean how often did you change residence?

Well I can remember the first property I ever, ever rented. No, no forgive me it was the second property we ever. It was so basic, so totally basic but fortunately my family are interior decorators and I have a knack of turning something very ordinary into something quite lovely and, even though it had an outside toilet for example, a friend of mine built me a new loo and then the plumbers came in and... Friends were kind enough to do things for me for free.

Mmm, so you got a loo inside?

No, no. We still had the loo outside but at least it was a dignified thing and not what was actually offered to me in the first place. And then I painted the house throughout and generally... And I did the garden and had the fences fixed through kindnesses and a lot of this was bartered, a type of a bartering system, I'll care for your kids for this day if you'll do this for me, that type of thing. That's how we managed 30 odd years ago.

Mmm.

And, but, but as soon as my house was into a standard that was quite beautiful, the owners of the house came and promptly put my rent up three times as much as I was paying at the time.

Mmm.

And that absolutely flattened me because I had to leave there. I just couldn't continue there.

Mmm and so when did you first buy a house?

I eventually then, then I moved in with a guy that I'd been going out with for quite a few years. I'd been going out with him about 14 years but never ever, ever was I living with him but we decided to live together but unfortunately that was a big mistake even though that we had bought together a property you know and I had the furnishings to furnish a house.

Oh so you bought a house jointly?

Yeah, yeah we bought a house jointly and within a year and a half we realised it was a most shocking, shocking decision and I was allocated I think \$23,000 out of that huge house, which was a pittance I can tell you, because that house is now worth probably half a million dollars. And from that twenty three thousand dollars is where I ...

It got you into home ownership.

Yeah, yeah.

Independently.

Totally, yeah, yeah and I, I kept every cent that I ever put my hands on and if I was able to get any part time work which I did quite frequently, always that money went straight back into my house or my home or for my kids, yeah.

This is interesting to hear.

[Pause.] A lot of it, but I think as years go by you tend to it tends to disappear, the enormity of it and the... I can remember the first time the St Vincent de Paul people came with food vouchers to, or food for our house and that was only because somebody realised that something was seriously [laughs] wrong, was the humiliation and the horror that comes with that.

So you mean you didn't seek that out yourself?

Oh, not at all, not at all. Well for a start I never realised it was there [sniffs] and then when it was there I felt so guilty and I don't know why I felt guilty but, then I would go and volunteer my time to raise money for the youth club or whatever. I always felt a need to repay what I was receiving from whoever was charitable enough to help us.

Mmm.

Mmm, [sniffs] I'm, I can't say I mean many, much of our life was hard but we had a lot of laughter and yeah we got through a lot of things. I found some of my foster kids actually came through my front door who were homeless or in need of somewhere to stay and yeah [pause] I just felt if we've got four we might as well have five people in the house and [sigh] we got through.

Mmm, so you said you had 38 foster children.

Twenty eight in total, that's with my own four children, yeah and but I, that was something I chose to do and I felt that seeing that I was at home with my own little people you know another extra one or two or whatever was an ok thing and it in fact gave friendship to my kids. It gave immediate playmates to my kids and it worked out really well, really well, yeah.

And so do you have any contact with the foster children?

Foster children, I did for a long time. Two of them are in my life still through their mother who was one of my best friends in Melbourne and I had her daughters when they were two and three and they're now in their early forties, late thirties and early forties and they've maintained contact with us all the time. I personally am not worried that I don't hear or I do hear from people because I genuinely feel that things come into our lives and leave and it's only there for a moment of teaching or whatever. It doesn't owe me a lifetime of commitment because I looked after you for a year or two or whatever it

Mmm.

I was only 22 years of age when I had my first foster person and she was 15 and, a little girl who god help her had come from [pause] Berlin as with her parents and placed into an orphanage at two. Adopted at eight and thrown out at 15 and she stayed with me for five years. Now you know in that time we learned a lot and I was only a very young person myself but we learned a lot and I, I saw her happily married and that was the end of it. I haven't heard from her since which is fine, which is fine, yeah. I do keep in touch with, I had up until recently kept in touch with my half, my aboriginal children I had after Darwin, so Darwin Tracey, I had two young children, aboriginal children or at least three-quarter aboriginal children for a year after Darwin Tr ... and I kept in touch with them for a long time.

Ohh. So they actually came from Darwin?

Yes they did. They were in the cyclone.

Mmm.

Yeah and their father who was a white fellow worked with the water resources and he was actually in my town in Victoria at my birthday party in fact and he said that he was trying to find an acc ... help for his two children and I had no idea, none, that they were aboriginal children and I said look, I'll take them if you wish and I was living in the house with my partner at that time which was a huge house so two more little people was no deal at all.

Mmm.

And he unfortunately, had said to me I'd rather you see them first and I said oh, for some reason I said for God's sake, black blue or polka dot they're, you know they're welcome and as it happens they were two little black children, so ... but they were lovely, lovely children. But that was a great teaching point in my life again because I learned so much from those little people because I didn't know that children didn't know that there were [laughs] such things as toilets and taps and [sniffs] toothbrushes and [pause] stuff.

Mmm.

Yeah so that was a great teach ... I've, I've always found in circumstances [sniffs] that I've learned an [stressed] enormous amount from whatever situ, situ, situation that I've been in.

What happened to those children's mother?

She was up in aboriginal ... She was still up there.

But no home to live in?

No they didn't, but she was a really nearly full cast aboriginal so and the government at that stage did give enormous money to those people [sniffs]. She would come with rolls and rolls of money, but I think it was the children ... After the cyclone hit they pulled people out very quickly and these two flew down to his brother-in-law.

Oh.

And but he simply couldn't cope with the fact that they were black kids.

Mmm.

[Sniff, sniff.] *How sad's that?*

Mmm.

[Conversation deleted.]

Yeah, so can you tell me a bit more about the circumstances that led you to come to live here?

In Tasmania?

Well here in this unit.

In this unit, yeah.

You can start with Tasmania if you like.

Yeah well I first came up to live in [name of town deleted] and I had the most beautiful little cottage but it grieved me enormously that, I didn't have sufficient funding to keep the house in, in good repair.

Mmm.

And over the years I was watching it deteriorate and I knew that, when big, major things went wrong with the house, I wasn't going to cope.

So you bought this house when you came?

Yeah I did buy it at a very cheap price and so conse ... but I made it look very beautiful, so it was adequate but then it started to deteriorate and then my health deteriorated along with it to such a degree that I was not able to get to my back door without losing my breath or whatever, whatever. So I eventually decided I had to sell and pay off my bills and so forth which gave me less than enough money to buy another house and I was influenced by Housing that, I would still be allowed \$23,000 in my account and still be eligible for assistance here.

Mmm.

And, so after a while I did apply for Housing and with the, the ... My qualifications were I think was, were that my circumstances was pretty poor, my health was extremely poor and certainly I didn't have money to put myself back in to the, you know, general race of housing and so I applied and I was granted this unit. My first reaction to the unit was oh my God I couldn't possibly live there and that wasn't being fussy, it was the fact that I'd always lived in huge houses and I had furnished my house that I used to, that I used to, lived in with brand new furnishings and so forth and they were offering me a one bed-roomed, one unit, one bed-roomed-unit and but after thinking about it through the night I realised that if I wanted to survive, if I wanted a better quality of life, I was to accept this is where my life was at so I sold what furnishings I had just bought, at a great loss I can tell you, but and then bought what was, which would fit the house, it's, the little unit itself and I've made in into a rather lovely little unit, [sniff] yeah, and I enjoy it very much but even so I'm finding that even my health, the tiny garden I've got is a little bit overwhelming.

Mmm.

So, it's all relative I think to age, and my age is now 65 years of age and what you're capable of but this house, this little unit in fact gives me dignity. It gives me dignity. It gives me privacy. It gives me companionship, friendship with people, most of the people I might say within my complex of six houses, six units; and I'm extremely lucky in that it's very flat. There ... It has wheelchair access, which I will need in the next year or three and I'm extremely close to the city, to the township. I'm close to ambulance, doctors and so forth. So I consider myself extremely lucky, yeah.

So your health problem it's with your breathing?

Yes. I have a thing called fibromyalgia and, which is totally debilitating throughout your body, but also I've just been clarified it's been clarified to me that I have a thing vocal chord dysfunction which means that where they thought I had this debilitating asthma. My lungs simply shut up and I can't breathe and I'll either pass out or I simply can't walk forward or backward. It's totally debilitating but in the next month and we're now in May, June sorry, within the next month I'm seeing a heart specialist again and I'm going to have some sort of surgery hopefully to help that.

With your vocal chords?

Mmm.

Is that to do with the fibromyalgia?

No. They're two separate things completely. Yeah, vocal chord dysfunction is within the throat and it's something to do with, the vocal chords simply shut down and you can't breathe in or out and so you

start to cough and it appears like an asthma attack. And but the fibromyalgia is horrific. I, I've got an episode of it right at this moment, in the last week or two where the pain is excruciating and you're on pain killers most of the time, mmm, but I think to qualify my real joys at being here if you like because I feel there's an attitude within housing [pause] patrons if you like. I, I have a girlfriend who lives in the same complex and she said, oh if this was my house, if this was my house I'd have a beautiful garden and I said to her but where are you going and she said what do you mean [name deleted] and I said surely this is yours for life.

Mmm.

And she said, she said I didn't think of that and I do believe, I believe that because I've lived in my own property and it's been obligated to me to care for my house and my garden et cetera et cetera, I've come with a different attitude to a lot of people, not most people but a lot of people within Housing complexes that they think it's the right of the Housing people to care for these properties, not they care for the property.

Mmm, so they don't have such a sense of ownership.

No they don't. They don't and part of that's to do with the, the, the situation with Housing because I know for a fact that I saw within Housing Tasmania things on their walls in Glenorchy which said do you wish to paint your house and do you wish to do this, this, this and then contact us and then you can do it, and you know get approval and so forth. But I've now been told only recently that they do not encourage people to upgrade their houses.

Mmm.

Now that's two stories ... That's two, that's two views being put out there so it can become very confusing to the tenants.

Mmm, because you've done a lot of work here?

Oh! I had, I, whatever monies I had left by the time I bought myself a decent car and if I could tell you it's the first decent car I've ever had in my life, and I bought everything new, for example fridge, washing machine, television and so forth but if I could also say that's the first new television I've ever had in my life.

Mmm.

So, but I felt that seeing that I was being helped with my housing I could afford now to have the best in my house so that I had peace and I had beautiful things around me.

Mmm. So you were able to do that with what was left from the house you sold.

That's right, that's right but at every time, at every point I notified Housing or Centrelink and, and they adjusted my pensions and or whatever, accordingly and yeah, so ...

So did you lose some from your pension when you sold your house?

Yes, yes I did for a while; not for, nor for very long it's all come back to you know, it's all back to normal now.

But you had to live off your ...

Yeah, yeah.

Proceeds for a while?

Which is appalling really when you think about it because what it means is that that really wasn't your money. You know what I mean. You had no way ... That's why I bought immediately into another house because if you've bought into a house it meant that that, that was an ok thing but you couldn't have collateral or money if you wish.

So you were mostly on a pension?

Yeah.

But for a time, you just when you sold a house you bought immediately into another one?

Yes, yeah, part of that was due to, you've only got a timeframe, it's only a matter of weeks, that if, if you do not buy on you then start to lose your pension.

Mmm.

So it does put a pressure onto you to buy into a house as soon as possible and you were always, I was always at the lower end of the buying, buying frame because, well that's all the money I had but I knew with my own capabilities that I would upgrade that house by what I was going to do to it, you know, as long as it was structurally sound and uh you know, I knew that I'd make it into a beautiful home and in that way that it would make money to buy again, mmm.

Mmm.

So that's how we kept going for years and years and years.

So that's why you chose to move to [name of town deleted] rather than say Hobart.

Yes, although I've got a strange thing about Hobart. Many of my friends live in Sandy Bay or Taroona or those areas and for me, [name deleted], I thought, it's not so impressive as it is to other people

because I lived in a place called Warrandyte in Victoria which is far superior to a lot of those places but to me it was more community than it was to have the, kudos I suppose of living in Sandy Bay or whatever because I know lots and lots of people who live in Sandy Bay who are extremely poor you know and I live in Sandy Bay didn't mean anything to my head but my ex partner and I used to come up here and visit into [name of town deleted] and then go driving around the [name deleted] Valley and there was something about this place, [name of town deleted], that appealed to me and I decided to, I, I always said I'd come here to live.

Mmm.

And it's the best thing I've ever done.

Mmm. So how long ago did you buy the house here?

When I first came here, probably 12 years ago and because of my person and because of the type of person I am and my background, I have been very community minded and because of that I feel safe again here. I'll give you an example that only this week, I've made Wills before but my ex-husband is dying at this stage, and it's caused such a kafuffle for my two girls in South Australia to, trying to sort out his problems but and if I was to die tomorrow, for example, I am here on my own literally. There's no family. They're either in England, or there's my daughters, over in South Australia. But do you know what I know? I know that if I died tomorrow I would have a beautiful funeral because I consider the people of [name of town deleted] my family for the most part. I feel safe, emotionally safe and not just physically safe and yeah it was all, all about community for [name deleted], to come and live in [name of town deleted] and I love it. I love it when I walk down my town, into my township, that without exception every second person is saying good day [name deleted] how are you [name deleted] whatever. You know you can live in many places and not know anybody.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Yeah. So can you tell me a bit more about what community means for you? Or how you could tell you might find it here?

Yeah. I think the people here in [name of town deleted] and I say this with total respect for them, are very basic and, they're very, they've lived in their own worlds you know not sophisticated in many ways but for whatever reason but what I have found was there is such a complement to the person that I am is that they were genuinely caring people and they took me to their hearts. I, I think because a lot of the work that I've done within this town has to, been to help people within this town with say crime prevention or whatever and mediation or so forth and I think that's because I had the knowledge to do it and they came to me and out of that became this wonderful friendship with so, so many people and I

know for example I've had to be hospitalised in the last year probably four or five times and I own a dog whom I love but I knew I could walk away from my house and my little dog be cared for, my house by the time I came out of the hospital the house was cleaned through. There was a meal waiting. And that's community.

Mmm.

Yeah. That's community. I just, I truthfully know friends who live in other areas of... of Tasmania who really don't even know their neighbours.

Mmm.

And I, I honestly think when you're a person, as you're getting on in years and in particular if you were originally, and I think I've said this to you before, from another country, you get to this end of the year, end of your life and you realise you really are isolated. And unless you make the effort to connect to your community, you will be isolated.

Mmm. That's what I was going to ask you, we how, I'm assuming you took the first step. I mean what was the first step you took in getting involved in the community here?

Well do you know I, I, I suppose I'm pre-programmed and also before I even came to the town and this is fact, I wrote to the local newspaper and said I'm about to come to live in your town and I would love to make friends with people, with, with the view, with the same interests and I named some of mine and before I even came into the town I'd had people who'd rung me

Mmm.

In my previous house in [name of suburb deleted] and you know, so I'd already had connections up here.

Mmm, so that was published in the newspaper?

Yeah, yeah, and yeah, so that's how it started.

And people read it and ...

Yes, sure.

Mmm, mmm.

And it was great. It was great and then ...

And so some people already knew you and they knew you'd shared their views.

Knew of me, yeah.

So how did you meet those people?

Oh just that phone connection and so forth, but unfortunately I had a major, major drama when I first arrived in [name of town deleted], where my sister in London had the most horrific accident and I was only half way getting furnishing ... This is, I'll tell you what this town is. I bought a house as I said, I buy houses and do them up and I bought this big frame of a house, perfectly in condition but absolutely appalling in garden and structure inside and, I'd been up here and I believe in buying into your own town and not going elsewhere for things and I asked this man to go through this house and put furniture, carpets down and he went in and did this. Now I haven't paid this man. I haven't seen this man. I didn't know this man from [name deleted] and down went \$5,000 worth of carpet. Well the next day my sister was in a, in a horrendous accident where she lost half her face the following day. Now I... she was in London, I wasn't sure at that stage whether I was flying out to London or moving house and everything was ready to come, literally on a truck. And, but I went to this carpet man and I said, look I'm sorry but my money's not through. This has happened. This has happened and he said don't worry about it. Pay it when you've got it. And then the removal person came and then this other person came and then I needed a small gate to keep my garden, oh then I needed wood and the woodsman then said, oh how are you going to keep your dog in. We'll come and build you a fence. And it was, it was almost like it was ... I was in awe of these people.

Mmm.

I was in awe of them and to this day they're still my friends.

Mmm.

And over the years I've been able to help them with other types of things that they probably couldn't get help for. They didn't know how to get help, like medical help, or whatever and that's, they type of person these are. I don't know why people, I mean there's a lot of people who actually frowned and said, ooh [name deleted], [name of town deleted], do you know what it is. Well I defy people to now come up into [name of town deleted] and really, and not be impressed with it because I can guarantee it's going to be a place of real interest to much of Australia and it will be the place to live and I'll be glad to be part of it's structure.

[Conversation deleted.]

Mmm.

Through, through my work in [name of town deleted], initially writing articles and I was given free range in their paper. I loved it [sniff] because I saw so much beauty in this town and I, I do know ... I

remember writing, in many cases we live for so long in one area but we don't see what's around us. And I started looking into and describing the valleys and the beauty and what could be done and what could not be done, and visions and et cetera and having whole double pages given to me to write about and through that, through that work and through acting on causes, or particularly, people got to know you and respect you, or certainly some people dislike you, but I think they will dislike anybody. And so but I'm not there for a popularity contest at all, but yeah, many I've got many, many of my files of writing and I'm watching it all com, come to fruition like ships on the, on the, coming back on our river and you know, old buildings being taken and re, ren ... being renovated and upgraded and made looking, made beautiful, yeah. It's a very, very exciting town.

Mmm, yeah, so it's got a character all of it's own by the sound of it and you've somehow understood the character of the town.

Yes. If I can say, say this to you though that I have found that many thinking people who've come either from England and or from interstate to live here, and this is the difference, we've chosen to live here.

Mmm.

Many of my friends have opened businesses here and they have tapped into the beauty and what we are doing is showing the way, if you wish, not in any ... We are showing by example, if you wish, what can be done to your house.

Mmm.

And, and people, you know I mean they've never ... some people have never been shown how to decorate a house or do whatever, whatever and you really don't need a great deal of money to do these sort of things and I know and I've got a network of friends here, and I would say ninety percent of all are ex-New Norfolk people but they have assimilated to such a degree in our town and they've brought in... I have a girlfriend who is from Iran actually ...

So you're saying a high proportion of the residents aren't from here?

That are doing many things structural is what I'm saying.

Oh, that they're actively involved?

Yeah, yeah the newer comers, yes, probably in the last say six years it's been very prevalent and a lot of the money, and I'm talking about multi-millions, millions of dollars investing in our town have been brought in from the Tattslotto people for example and other multi-millionaires who have come in and taken these crappy old buildings and taken them back to their beauty.

Mmm.

[Conversation deleted.]

[Tape stopped and turned over. An exception made to the 45 minute rule due to long windedness and extensive digressions, meaning the questions had not been completed.]

Mmm.

So is there anything you don't like about living here?

Umm, [exhales] [pause] there are, there's a certain element, but I choose not to be really involved with them but they seem to involve themselves in my life, that are trouble making and nit picking and so forth but I, I really do think that's in every society. I've been fortunate that most of my friends are articulate and thinking people, so therefore they wouldn't make issues of, that some of these people have made towards me. You know, writing letters, complaining about me, whatever, that type of thing which will sound very snobby when I say it's so beneath me it's not funny but and I don't even know how to react to that sort of thing but there, ah, when I first came here twelve fifteen years ago I used to see in the paper, local paper often, notification that says if I find this person doing this I'll sue this and I'll sue that and I used to think good Lord who'd do that sort of thing but I do now, do know it's there within the community. Those sorts of things I find not good [sniffs]. There's an element of course of youth problems, but I've actually lectured with sir, with the main police force here and I helped to get legislation changed with regard to hoons. The hoon law here has now been changed because, directly because of our work, because we had an, a situation of here, a very small proportion and it really was only six percent of our community who were causing havoc to such a degree with an ageing population, as most people are in New Norfolk, being terrorised by these people but with myself and the help of ah, police ministers and so forth we were able to teach the public and put it into perspective that this was six percent, not 60 percent of the community so therefore empowering the people to take back their streets and although we've still got this, this element, we, you know people are now feeling more empowered and yeah, so ...

So who were the hoons?

Usually young teenagers.

Mmm.

Young teenagers in cars, break-ins [stressed] and graffiti and you know. You see people like myself, and my friends; I don't know what it is but graffiti just nearly makes me want to tear my hair out.

Mmm.

I've got no time for it at all. These people, the do-gooders who say it's all very creative, well let them create on their front door, you know and because I think if you've taken the time to paint your house or your fence you don't want some little monster come graffiti it and yeah [sniffs]. I suppose another, another issue here, and I guarantee you I'm right. It's gambling. Gambling is a very big and bad issue here. I myself, I absolutely love the pokies. I can't believe I'm saying that and neither can my kids because it's so un-me but I know it's a mindless thing but I believe. I, I watched something so appalling happen [sniffs] on the day that the government gave the single families all that \$600. I've forgotten what it was for, something to do with children.

Mmm.

And I was actually at the hotel for, having lunch and you couldn't get in or near the poking area, poking machine area and I know this for a fact they took \$74,000 in that day and it's a very, very big issue.

Mmm.

You know and I think there's a lot of things within the system that really needs a woman looking at it [laughs] to, to, to change the structure of it but you know those, there are a few families that made well of that money that was given to them but an awful lot didn't I can tell you.

Mmm.

And, yeah. Housing, , if I can make a point of this. The one thing that I don't like and I had brought an issue up with the local, in the newspapers with the local house agents, is that the, we had from nine eleven, so what was that, what date was that?

2001?

No when the, planes went in.

2001.

Yeah, what was the date?

September 11.

September 11. Yes from September the 11th.

[Inaudible.]

If I can tell you what happened, they've actually restructured the world, but they've restructured Australia too and many people who never ever had been here to Tasmania suddenly decided the option

of coming here for a holiday and because the boats were bringing cars over for nothing and so forth, we suddenly had 280,000 people in one year.

Visit to Tassie?

Come to Tassie. Now this is, this is what happened. Suddenly they thought, oh quaint, beautiful. My God, when you compared our houses at 80, 90y, 100 thousand to their 300 plus thousand dollars, what then happened, there became in the last five or six years a massive, massive buy of properties and they couldn't get enough properties because people were buying as many as two or three houses a time, interstaters, some I know all this is for fact, over the Internet, sight unseen.

Mmm.

And those tenants were then told that their rents had suddenly gone from say, \$70 to \$80 to \$120, and \$130. This was in fact done to me from the first house I was renting and you know and I went to see one of the house agents and said what the heck are you doing to our people and he said, oh they get house, they get rent assistance, what difference does it make?

Mmm.

Now that was an attitude but [stressed] now it's gone out of control because the rent assistance on say, I, an average house now a hundred and seventy, hundred and eighty dollars a week. New Norfolk, for Christ's sake! Yeah. Now if we take that back to a hundred and forty a week, our pensions haven't gone up to accommodate that.

Mmm.

So it's plain ... what it's doing. This is how it's affecting back on Housing Tassie, is that, I had a man here recently who was paying a hundred and twenty dollars a week out of his pension. He lives just here in [name deleted] Street and he said they've sold my property to an interstater, [name deleted], now they want an extra \$60 a week.

Mmm.

Sixty, that's \$180 a week. Now this man was sixty, yeah, and he was devastated. I actually phoned Housing Tassie from here and I said can he make application. Yes he can but quote, there's a two year's, two-year wait. That's, that's a standard reply. But, but, he's 60 years' old; what's he supposed to do?

Mmm.

There's got to be certain things. Now he's had a lady in his life, yes, that they've been sort of seeing each other for several years. They do not live together but I think there's going to have to be a readjust ... readjustment within the housing si ... situation where after a certain age surely [stressed] it doesn't matter that they're having sex or living together, because ...

In terms of their pension, mmm.

Pensions

Mmm.

I think it should be that they are enable, enabled, they are able to live together provided it's all above board and, and notified by both departments of your department in Tassie, adjust the rents so that they can both contribute to that, but it solves a problem. At the moment he's paying rent, she's paying rent; electricity, electricity et cetera and both of them are living below the poverty line.

But they'd be better off whatever the penalties, they'd be better off living together wouldn't they.

Absolutely.

Mmm.

The, the ... I've got a neighbour who does this, whose partner is there from nine thirty in the morning, or earlier possibly, till nine thirty at night, yeah, then she drives him home and they are for all intents, intents and purposes husband and wife.

Mmm.

But it's ludicrous that she has to drive him home because of the bloody pension and or Housing.

Mmm. So, in terms of they couldn't live in each of their own places if they were a couple, or...

Well, my argument, my argument to them was surely you would be better if you just combined everything and take the loss, whatever it was, but ...

These units are a bit small for two aren't they?

That is but she used to live there initially with her husband so it can be done.

Mmm.

It can be done.

Mmm.

And, and I'm, I'm probably saying that I'm not necessarily talking about that one, but un... that one lady or her partner but he's eighty, she's 73. What are we talking about?

Mmm, I didn't realise he was that old, mmm.

And, and the point is ...

But they live separate lives. They feel that for whatever reason, because of the policies around public housing ...

Because you can't ...

And pensions.

You can't have people stay over.

Yeah.

You know there are certain things that really, really do need looking into. It needs looking into that, you know, after a certain age it shouldn't matter. I don't mean open slather but they should be able to accept that they are partners and that the, you know, he is staying there and so what.

And so he just goes home to sleep basically.

Literally.

Mmm.

And then when you take the big picture that I'm just saying that people...

Because he can't sleep at her place, of course?

No [pause] but for Christ's sake he's 80.

What difference does it make?

He's 80.

What difference is it going to make to anyone whether he sleeps there or at his place?

Absolutely.

Mmm.

And when you think of this too, getting back to the expanse of money that's been put onto these houses!

[Laughs.]

When they're running out of houses! Housing Tasmania are so stressed at the moment, right.

Mmm.

You know why they're stressed? Well there's one house you could have, hypothetically. Here's the old man going home to sleep, yeah.

Mmm.

Because of a policy that says they can't sleep, sleep together.

It's to do with the pensions and rents and everything isn't it?

That's right.

Yeah. Now what I am saying is, if they'd use their heads and said okay, you've, you have come out honestly and said you are partners, now that frees up a house.

If he could say, he could move in there?

That's right!

But ah, he doesn't want to move in there because he'll lose some of his pension?

Yeah probably.

Yeah ...

They're not thinking straight because what they need to know is while he's paying rent, while he's paying power, while he's paying all those things to maintain that house.

Mmm.

He might as well lose it, because he's not there. He's not living there.

Yeah, because certainly there is an increase in single person households isn't there?

And I think you ...

Do you think government policies are contributing to that?

Absolutely.

Mmm.

Absolutely. I think they really do need. I mean, I'm interested that you are, you are doing this, this interviewing now because it's the first time really that I, [name deleted], or but then I've not been in Housing for my, all of my life, but I don't know that we really get a voice, you know what I mean and I really do think ...

Mmm, just to talk from a common sense perspective of what is happening on the ground.

Yes.

In response to the policies.

Yes.

Because sometimes people, they don't want to tell the government do they?

No. Well I, I think, I think this because in many cases the, the answer is that the government don't give a toss. They don't care about the little people but they do. I think that we need to re-educate the people to know that their voice is very valid and this is what I've tried to encourage people to, to do. I've become, as one woman so, so eloquently put it, the mouth of Tasmania.

Yes, so you have a voice, yeah.

So I have a voice.

Mmm.

[Conversation deleted.]

you know a lot of departments are not treated properly by the clients, if you wish, because it's a stand-off, you've got a Mexican stand-off here [sniff] because a lot of people go to these welfare departments or whatever. They have the, the, the people who are interviewing them have been so insulted et cetera, et cetera. They get fed up. The clients get fed up and so there becomes this standoff.

Mmm.

Whereas we, we got a situation where I said to social security and welfare get to know who I am. Put a name to me.

Mmm.

Identify me. And it works a lot easier and lots of people are my friends who found themselves in situations they'd never been in, in their lives. For example, they were married forever and he's run off with the little girl from down the street. She's now in her late forties to fifties and has only ever been a wife and is now fronting up to try and get a job. She's not qualified for anything as she thinks, because all she's ever been is a mother she said, and they were sending her for exam ... I'll use one example, and sending her for all sorts of ridicul ... ridiculous jobs that she couldn't possibly do.

Mmm.

She was late forties and she said I hated that and standing there and they're saying name, address, age, how much you got in the bank, et cetera.

Mmm.

And I said are you aware, and it's not generally known, this is just an example, that you can request a private booth.

Mmm.

You do not have to stand there and be you know humiliated, in front of ... A lot of people don't care.

Mmm.

You know it's all part of the system but if you've got any dignity at all, you want to speak quietly, you ... By the time she's got to that queue, and standing in that queue as she said, with all those unemployed boys, [name deleted], and she's a mum!

Mmm, and she does have standing in the community as a ...

She does.

Yeah.

She does. And I can multiply that by millions of people and I said you don't ever go away... ever go there feeling that way because you see they'd lost sight of the fact that the people there in those departments were there to help that person, but because of the situation both sides were abusive, yeah.

They didn't, they weren't communicating well.

No!

No.

Not at all!

And when people get frustrated then, yeah ...

Housing is this way too. You know when I was starting to upgrade in my house here I had a certain woman in this, not her, not there but another lady said, why are you spending your money, when it's not your property.

Mmm.

Right!

It's your home.

It's my home and, and you see but unfortunately ...

So people get it mixed up, in terms of economics and home and in fact for everybody their home is not about economics.

No it isn't.

No.

It isn't, but they, they've got this take-take attitude too, is that, and this is why most, most of Housing Tas, Housing, your Housing Tassie, because I don't know any other type of housing, it all looks the same and it all looks institutionalised and this I absolutely abhor, because they're too frightened to make a difference to their house.

Mmm.

You know, just this tiny little bit of fretwork.

It makes it stand out.

It makes it stand out and my pots outside my ...

Yeah. It's [name deleted]'s place and [name deleted] likes old houses.

My friend. My little friend, head of the, housing at welfare, came to see me from Melbourne and drove into our complex and she said, I knew that was your house as soon as I saw it. Now...

So there's something of you in that.

Yes. Now if I can say to you. This is another area that's seriously has to be looked into, with Housing, that the laws, laws are only there as guidelines. They're not set in concrete and if somebody would like to do, as long as, I know that is policy, that if you get permission it can be done but for the most part, for example, when I came here this woman was saying to me, you're going to get into trouble for getting that fence up. You're going to get into trouble for doing this. You're going to... Huh, huh!

Which fence is that?

The fence I told you we've put up here in the pergola area.

Mmm.

And putting up the pergola and so forth, and somebody else in this complex...

But you got permission for all that.

Of course so! And I got it. I [inaudible]...

It was a sense from other people that it wasn't condoned.

Absolutely! And you see and, and as with the dog you see, and then one person within the complex took it upon themselves and you know of this to write and say, and said, and I had the copy of the letter which said, "and as for all her renovations, with or without your permission" and then the dog got a serve and so-and-so got a serve.

And it's the policy also, especially for an older person in the, these sorts of units, it's fine to have a dog.

Yes, yes.

Provided it's ...

It's nice dog.

Well managed and ...

Yes. Well you couldn't get a better dog than [name deleted] and, and that's, I swear that's true but... but she took it upon herself but ...

Yes, so there's this sense in some people's mind that there's a whole lot of things in public housing you can't do.

Exactly, exactly and so consequently Housing loses out. I can tell you it really is an issue that there is, it's like [name deleted]'s attitude, oh that's not my house so I won't do the garden. Well who's going to do it for her?

Mmm.

You know and it should be encouraged. I noticed ...

And who's going to enjoy it too.

And who's going to enjoy it. I mean every part of my little unit, I love, and, you know so, and I've also willed it over because they said recently that they can't have people putting stuff up and knocking it down and I said well I'll will ...

Oh so you'll let the next person have it.

Have it.

So, there's two choices, you can either remove it and pr ...

Put it back as it was or ...

Or, if the next person wants it ...

Yes. Well because of the way it's done, and they've already come an ... and looked at it; I've already willed it that if I die these, and I note, I noted everything, the lace, the, these blinds which was nearly a thousand dollars, through the house. I mean why would you take them down and put those ...

Oh, they're lovely. They make it lovely.

Exactly, exactly. And, and ...

And why would you put vertical drape or whatever they put in?

Ooh, horrible things. But what I've actually willed to, for the enjoyment of the next tenant, you know, as with the carpet and so forth. I mean who would And I, I've, I've written out a Will only this week which says, please secure the house immediately so that none of this can be taken away.

Mmm.

Yeah. So I've sort of prearranged it all really.

Oh, so otherwise your beneficiaries could come and take it away?

They won't. Yeah, they wouldn't that sort of thing down but you know I, I noticed when that house became vacant, across, [name deleted]'s house, they went and, they knocked down anything that wasn't there privac ... previously, little tiny fences and such ...

But who knocked it down?

The, Housing people.

Oh.

And I said, at the front of her house as you drive in, there was a piece of lattice there and I went over and I said look can you please leave that.

[Conversation deleted.]

Can you please leave with, that, up there for that lady? No we can't do that.

[Conversation deleted.]

Yeah, so because we've got onto the house, so is there anything more ... I mean you've done some work here and you've made it, you know, put your own touch on it and made it more comfortable and ...

Certainly.

Made the most of it.

Mmm.

Is there anything else you would change here if you were able to?

Oh yes! Yeah. I, I took frequently, I've put tables and chairs outside my property, on the grass, that we share as a community meeting place, and we often talk about things that are done or not done in our houses, and for example, I got permission to have an awful, horrendous cupboard taken out of my unit, a little one-bedroom unit, and this enabled me to have an extra eight square feet of area to, to use you know as my home and we all have decided within this complex, that we would do anything to have those taken out.

So where are these, the cupboards?

It was there, at the end of that bench.

Oh!

And it was about ...

Oh.

It was four, four foot square.

Ohh!

And up to the roof.

Oh, goodness me!

Yeah.

Yeah.

I'd love you to see in those houses.

So, as much as you want cupboard space ...

You don't want it there.

You don't want it there. Yes. *[Laughs.]*

And not in the middle of your lounge room, but ...

[Laughs.]

We have realised too, and maybe Housing should look into this, that 90 percent ... I came here and I used my bath, I put, I put a door over the bath and I was then able to put things on top of it and store things under it.

Mmm.

But if ... we could save millions of dollars, by not putting it in, in the first place.

Mmm.

A bath I mean, I'm talking about.

There's a big, for this small unit, there's a big bathroom, isn't there?

A huge bathroom.

And you could have a very big cupboard in there.

Absolutely and I think that people would be more able, more grateful being able to store stuff in there because the walk-in, the oh the ride-in with the, oh, what do you call it, shower, is perfect, absolutely perfect, but cupboard space, we could take away the baths, not put them in unless they're specifically needed for a disabled person, but millions of dollars could be saved, and more space could be given to us.

Mmm.

And yeah, so there are a few things that we'd like [pause] different.

Mmm, and can you tell me about your neighbours.

Neighbours. For the most part I've got lovely neighbours. I've never been a let me go visit the neighbour type person, they are friendly for the most part, one is not so friendly, at first she was my very best friend and was in here all the time but, then for some reason known to her, she decided that she'd become nasty towards me and wrote to the Housing Tassie and she could in fact have caused a lot of problems but because I'd done everything ethically, and to the letter, you know it was her that was actually in trouble, but for the most part I don't, no I don't, I'm not a big neighbour person to be honest with you.

Mmm.

If, if we see each other we call in, and it's for a cup of tea or very quick, or if I'm sitting outside then I come and sit, and share some time with us.

Mmm.

Yeah.

So you don't know them all, all that well?

[Name deleted], in the middle, as I call her because there's three [name deleted]s live side by side, she's a lovely, lovely lady and, yeah, we've befriended each other, but I c ...

There's three [name deleted]s?

Yeah, [name deleted] there, [name deleted] in the middle and [name deleted] in the front, yeah, yeah.

But people here, they do help each other. You were telling me something about that before.

[Sniff] *I would suggest that people, that when I say people help each other, I'm talking about people in [name of town deleted] generally.*

But in these units, I mean even with the prowler people ...

Oh yes, yeah they, they thought to give me a ring

And you had a meeting.

And but yes we did have a meeting yesterday, but that was just with three of us out of six units because the other three are not necessarily wanting to do anything about it but they're the people that rang us to say that they're in trouble, you know.

But they can ring.

Of course they can.

You've all got each other's numbers.

Yes they can. Yes they can. Yes they can, yeah I can't think of anything else unless you question me.

But you're saying generally in [name of town deleted] you find people help each other.

Very, mmm.

I guess it has got some sort of kind of country town thing going.

You're definitely an outsider for a long time here, [sniff] but with myself, helping "them" if you like, or one of their neighbours or whatever, it's, I find it rather lovely that you earn your brownie points and then you're one of them, for in particular, the fact that I don't get paid for anything in whatever work I do enables me to, they, they can see I'm doing it for the benefit, benefit of the people and not for, because it's my job or you know or whatever.

Mmm.

And I honestly, I swear to you I believe that I've made good contribution to my town and ...

And you're known for that I think.

Yes, yeah.

So are you planning to make any changes to your housing in the future?

No, not at all, this is here for life. I'm here for life. I feel quite joyful of a morning when sort of wake up and I look out and everything is [pause] "nice" if you like.

Mmm.

And I don't like that word particularly but there's something ... And again, it's out of your own creation isn't it that, it's what you make of your house. I lived in a tent once when my house, that house was being built that I told you I had you know with that partner of mine and ...

In Warrandyte?

Yep, and I had the best tent. We put a floor in, we put bedside tables in it and you know what I mean.

Was he building the house?

He and builders, yeah, yeah, and yeah, so ... I think, I think I'm one of those people truthfully who would make the best of anything, but I feel, I feel so strongly that there has to be some more communication with the, with the people. For example, you've got a booklet that comes out I think once a month or once every six months or whatever, community news or something.

Community Chat?

Chat, and I tried to get involved with that, yeah, and because that's my thing but when I spoke to somebody who was actually one of the head people of that, I suddenly, it was suddenly indicated to me, oh no we don't want any suggestions made, or ...

Oh, to improve your place?

Improve your place!

So you wanted to let people know what you'd done?

Yeah.

Yeah.

I went and had photographs done and you know and I, I would have said you must get a builder; you must get permission whatever, whatever, whatever. I mean I'd never have done anything underhand and she said, oh I'll talk to my boss and I'll get back to you. She said but we don't want to encourage people to change their properties but we've not, I've not structurally changed it at all, not really.

Mmm. So the person in Community Chat actually said that to you?

[Conversation deleted..]

She said oh no, we don't want to encourage people and I thought well that's a shame.

Mmm, ah possibly to do with it just being a large bureaucracy and possibly you know, having an interest in the property, the need to keep a handle on what's happening, the risk that a lot of people wouldn't do it appropriately ...

But that's what I've just said to you. That, that's true; that's what I've said, but if the guidelines are if you request to do such and such these are the, this is what you must submit and this is what you m... It can't really go wrong, and but she said but you see by the same token reading that article, reading that booklet through two or three times, it indicates let's have your input.

Mmm.

But they don't want it. It's like this, tell me what you think but don't tell me what you think.

And it's almost like, this is your home for life, treat it as yours, but we'd rather you didn't make too many changes. [Laughs.]

Absolutely, and, and, and so I found. I felt very dishearten because ...

They'd rather you didn't personalise it?

Exactly.

[Softly.] There's mixed messages there.

It was because, if you got home one of the books yourself Jan and look it through it says you know some people bought, built a lovely little pergola-y thing, a community thing outside one of the properties and oh isn't this wonderful and they all stood under this; and I thought how exciting is this.

But who built it?

I don't know. I don't know, but it was a, a complex,

Mmm.

And look, somebody's had their gardens done and look isn't this wonderful.

Mmm.

So I was sort of stunned.

Somebody had some wonderful tulips in their garden once; I remember that, yeah.

And I thought oh let me do my bit because here was, what was that fellow who comes here? Steve Ahearn?

Mmm.

Every time he came up here he'd go, you blow my brain because there's always ...

Mmm.

There's always something going on or something; and he'd ring from here on the phone and, 'cos I'd said to him after I got things, these certain things done, Steve please, please, please can I get my cupboard taken out and he rang from here and I heard him, her say, you don't mean that bloody thing at the end of the kitchen?

[Laughs.]

And I'm going [as if cheering] yes! And she said tell her to write in, which I did and then I got a re ... a, answer, I'd already been told, yes.

It would have ruined the whole room.

Oh [with disgust], tell me about it!

It would make it so pokey wouldn't it.

Shocking! If you go in the others, little [name deleted] in the mi ...

Immediately where you come in and where you wheel around [inaudible].

Exactly, exactly; that claimed me that whole area; and it enabled me to put that chair back there and it enabled me to see the TV; it enabled me to talk to you whilst I'm cooking.

[Laughs.] Ah ha, yeah.

Yeah, you know, lot's of things but yeah but I was disappointed because I, I am a communicator I think and, and I think that a lot of times we can get messages through that are important, you know, yeah, but, you can't say ...

And someone will listen.

Exactly. Ah well you can't say go ahead and do something and then tell them oh no, you can only do it a certain way; you're not giving us any freedom at all. You know what I mean?

Yeah.

If you've got guidelines and if they, if you say, this is the lease and then you say if you make any alterations whatsoever to your property please apply "4" and then there's the guidelines.

And what's that?

For, for an alteration or removals.

But you have to write and ask permission.

Yeah I did. Yeah I did. Firstly I did over the phone. I did with Steven and then he phoned them. They said right. He said go ahead and do it and the letter came and said that has been approved.

Mmm.

You know, when I put that fencing up along that balc ... back fence, this woman (indicating next door) said you're going to get into trouble for doing that.

This is the lattice?

Yes!

Mmm.

But people could jump over that. It's only this high.

Mmm. I've heard that before from people in public housing, that the fences aren't high enough and it isn't secure.

Not nearly enough. It's a security ...

Issues with privacy as well.

It is, it is because I've got a pergola as well and you sit out there and there's people walking past talking to you, you know, and ...

I don't think she'd want to go out again. So we've got to be almost finished using up this tape. So you're not planning ... You've never thought of a retirement village or?

No, not at all, no, my next move from here will be to [name of aged care facility deleted]. I think we are very aware here that if we're taken from here, the next move for all of us in these communities is usually to [name of nursing home deleted] and that's usually because you've had a fall or you know, you're no longer able to look after yourself.

Mmm. Is it very big?

It's just been enlarged.

Mmm, so you'd have a, everyone here has a realistic prospect of being able to get in?

Yes they do. Yeah they do.

Mmm.

They do and it's getting bigger all the time.

So is it cost ... What about the costs?

I can only presume. I'm not sure because I've not enquired but I can only presume it's within the pocket of everybody because the lady who was living here also was [name deleted] and she went over there and she's well able to afford it so I think it's a cost factor, meaning if you can afford to pay you do pay.

But if you're on a pension ...

Yeah.

You can still get in.

Yes you can. Yeah. Yeah and it's a beautiful place.

Mmm.

It is a really, really nice place and just recently in the last year or two, they've, they've [pause] you know, they've added quite a lot and they're continuing to do such, yeah, but with the and, and that's another thing, you know, when [name of nursing home deleted] was first built and they were complaining about the, the grounds of the plus which were just mud and brick and so forth; now this might sound simplistic but I wrote an article which said surely, well see we've got four schools here, why can't we get every child to contribute fifty cents or a dollar, yeah, and we buy trees or a park bench or a bird bath and we name each section that school, this school, whatever.

Mmm.

Yeah. I, it's simplistic but it does work because it worked in [name of town deleted] when I did the same thing up there.

Yeah.

So you actually build a garden that's presented to the elderlies, by the children.

Mmm.

Yeah, and some of that's been done recently. I noticed some children here. It wasn't done at [name of nursing home deleted] but it certainly was done where they got their own trees. They bought their trees and then, and then it's easy to progress with this while there's trees growing if that school, child, it becomes their tree for example, in their school ground. That's how it happened in Mackay. New school built, no trees, so we got children to buy a tree, a sapling and then as he stay... He watered that garden, it became his tree.

Mmm.

But when he left school and the tree's only three four years' old somebody adopted that tree.

Mmm.

And it continued to grow, yeah; and they had a little plaque mad, simplistic, but it, there's a way of doing everything without costing the arm, an arm and a leg, yeah. I forgot to when I first came here, I opened a club for people like minded people and that went really, really well. We, we had music and we had supper.

In [name of town deleted]?

No here, in [name of town deleted].

Oh before you moved into the unit?

Yeah. Oh, way, way before, mmm.

So you're still ... Is that still going?

No, no. No, only because they chose to take it over and people think they know businesses...

So it's still going or it's gone?

No it's gone.

Someone took it over and it died.

Oh we can do it now [name deleted]. They thought I just sat in the door and said hullo.

Yeah.

Mmm doesn't work like that at all. Do you have other questions on your question?

One more.

Mmm, mmm.

What does growing older mean to you?

Oh, I ... I can say to you this that for the most part I did not, I've never, never been concerned about growing old because I'm fortunate to have, to have good genes so I look physically a lot younger than I actually am, but of late I have felt very sick and I actually have been very scared. Scared of this. What word am I scared of? Not of dying but of the sadness I'm at this tail end of my life and I suppose because I'm so active in my brain and so in love with life, it grieves me that I've got so little time left and I've got so much to do in it. But then you know when you think of my mother, who's 89 and still running around Europe. She's just booked her holiday for next year, in Spain, you know, I think that's where it comes from, in genes. There's a part of me that feels sad, I think I told you when you first came here that my ex-husband is dying right at this minute as we talk.

Mmm.

And, he is a lot older than myself but I feel, even though we haven't been together for 30 years, I feel incredibly sad to know that he's laying there dying.

Mmm.

And it ma ... It puts into perspective just how short our lives are.

Mmm.

And yeah, yes, it has made ... I only this week wrote out what I ... Because it's left my daughters, who live near their Dad, in a bit of a pickle as to how to manage his funeral and so forth, I decided I would do mine and the funeral people themselves give me the costs and so forth in fact, tomorrow, but I've written out only this week exactly what I want for my funeral.

Mmm. So you're going to pay for it all ahead of time?

Yeah.

Mmm.

Yeah, but it's not going to be anything grand or wonderful because I want to be cremated but he organised with me, see can I please say, that was another thing, when I had the money available before I spent it on my property I asked about buying my funeral, yeah.

Mmm.

Paying for it cash, and she said, quote I wouldn't be do that because it becomes an asset.

Mmm.

So I didn't do it. Now I'm trying to find the bloody money to pay for my funeral, but I.

Oh, it would be counted as an asset [in public housing assessment].

Yeah, yeah and so consequently, and then all these assets that you're supposed to, I'm supposed to have had.

Would it increase in value then?

Yeah. What it was doing, taking more and more from my pension so I hadn't just lost the seven thousand dollars for my funeral, I've also been deducted out of my pension as well.

So what are people supposed to do?

I don't know. I truly don't know.

Is their family supposed to pay for it?

Well presumably.

Or from whatever savings they might have.

I don't ... Yeah, yeah, probably but I'm only having and think of this too, that if I died tomorrow, I don't have family here at all and you.

Mmm.

And you will find a lot of people that were interstaters or overseas people here live in, a lot of them are in that circumstance. So here I am, dead on the floor. They take me out. Now then I've also, I've written exactly what my neighbours must do, which they've agreed to do.

Mmm.

What to do with my dog, yeah.

Yeah.

And also to secure my house whilst my daughters get over here.

So what would happen with [dog's name deleted]?

My girlfriend's going to take him.

Mmm.

Yeah. I only spoke to her yesterday again about it. She said nobody's getting [dog's name deleted]. I'll take him so I, I mean he's such a good dog, but I only want a church service but I want flowers and perfumed candles and beautiful music, then out the door, down the cremation bit.

Mmm.

And but, I don't want anybody following me out of that door, that's you know, so that saves a lot. I may as well. [Laughs.] And then Mt Wellington, throw me off up the top there.

Mmm.

So, getting old. Getting old to me means lots of things. Good things. It's amazing how much knowledge you've accumulated. And if you're in mentally good health, how safe you feel in a lot of things and a lot of things don't worry you that worried you years ago. I'm glad I've no longer got kids to look after or grand kids to look after or yeah, so there's a lot of good sides to it.

Mmm.

And having the freedom to come and go as you wish, if you're a single person, mmm. Lots of people still crave to have a partner around. It's not one of my cravings.

Mmm.

I suppose I've become selfish. I think I've done so; so much in my life for other people that I'm almost demanding this time is mine, yeah, yeah. I haven't got time to be caring for a partner or not having the freedom to sit and talk with you if I wanted to or ...

Mmm.

Yeah.

So what about growing older here. How do you feel about growing older here?

In my house?

Mmm.

My little cottage? I feel great because there are services here, which I've never had before for example. That's another thing that's rather marvellous. I find a lot of things, for example, cleaning windows, carpet cleaning et cetera. No we've got an organisation, we've got a situation where you ring up and they come and clean your windows.

Mmm.

And or scrub your bathroom. You can have three hours of two men's help either to do your garden or internal of your house or whatever.

Mmm.

And when ...

Per week?

No, no, per year I think it is.

Oh.

It's not really enough.

Through who?

Oh...

The Council?

"At Your Service", it's called.

Mmm.

Yeah it is, it's a community-based thing.

Community services, or something similar?

And, but it's so marvellous. It's so marvellous. But, you know ... I'm, if I had my way we'd get it more than that because once a year cleaning windows is not enough.

[Tape stopped.]

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How long have you lived here?

Oh God! How long have I lived here? About three years I think it is. No wait a minute. Yeah, about three years, yeah just coming up to three, I think it is.

Mmm.

Yeah.

And where did you live before you moved here?

Oh, I lived over in, in [name of town deleted], over on, in the [name of area deleted] there.

Mmm.

On about nine acres, a little timber house on nine acres.

Mmm. So you lived in a rural area.

Yes, well that was the whole point. That was the charm of it.

Mmm, and so how long had you been there?

Ah, about 12, 13 years I ... '89 to ... About 12 years I think.

So that was a lifestyle choice to live there?

Well it was a continuing lifestyle choice. I made the lifestyle choice in about 1980 when I moved from Sydney. I retired from work, moved from Sydney and I had enough money to buy, well build a small house in the country in New South Wales. That was a turning point in, in my life.

Mmm. So you did build a small house in the country in New South Wales before you came to [name of town deleted]?

Yes, that's right, yes.

Mmm.

Inflation overtook me, so eventually I ... I mean the only way I've ever been able to build up some kind of savings has been to, sell houses and then buy something else and then you know, raise the standard

and then make a profit on it and ... so I could buy a slightly better one next time. I certainly couldn't get it ... Get any money together just working. There again, it's a question of being unskilled and so on and having no future too in an, in an office situation.

So you felt that? That influenced you to retire, then?

Oh, absolutely, yes. I came out to ... I don't know if this is appropriate. I came out to Australia in 1970, 1971, as a married woman. My husband was very keen to come and I wasn't and, he was in a very senior job and once he got his feet under the table, he left and went to live with his secretary.

Mmm.

And I was stuck in a new country. He'd al ... He'd always taken the view that you should be in debt in an inflationary situation, so when we sold the house, it just about paid the mortgage.

Mmm.

He had high income, which he'd concealed of course. I had nothing and I had nowhere to live, no job. I'm unskilled except I'm a shorthand typist and I had no connections because the only connections we had were the company connections and no family. So I started with nothing in 1975.

Mmm.

And now I'm, I'm living quite comfortably, but it's mainly because I've been doing this. I, I, did get a small mortgage out of him; bought a flat in Sydney, in a high rise building and fortunately the sudden acceleration in prices there gave me a nest egg and I built it up from then.

Mmm.

Moving from place to place.

So when you mean a mortgage, you mean you got a cash amount that you could put a deposit on a house?

No, well there was enough to put a small deposit on the flat when we sold our house, and, and my settlement was a \$17,000 mortgage which my husband paid, over a period of donkey's years.

Oh, oh. To enable you to house yourself?

That's right, yes.

And so what sort of work were you doing [pause], just shorthand typing?

Shorthand-typing.

So, secretarial work?

Shorthand-typing, yes, yes.

And so then when you retired, you came to Tasmania.

I retired to New South Wales, country, in [name of town deleted]. I was there for about nine years.

[Name of town deleted]'s beautiful.

It is, nice being there. And then I sold up there and came down here because it was a cheaper housing market and I thought that would give me ... I was very, getting very close to the bone you see.

Mmm.

I, I did any job I could lay my hands on. I worked for the ABS for a while till that folded up. I worked as a kitchen designer. I did cleaning. I made wedding dresses. I did anything, because I had to supplement the, the pension, which wasn't enough, so.

You mean, after you retired, you still worked?

Mmm.

Yeah, whenever I could and then when the jobs folded up I, I went back on the pension.

And so you were also working when you came down here?

No. When I came down here, there was enough difference in the [pause], the housing prices for me to have enough to [pause] put a bit aside and, and by that time too I'd got my act together and I was able to set up house here so that I didn't have to buy any large items, and I managed quite comfortably on the pension.

Mmm. So you were able to invest some of that in, you know, in a...

Mmm.

Fixed account where you could ...

Well actually I spent it all finally on the house, because I kept improving it. [Laughs heartily.]

[Laughs.]

But, but I had enough on the pension to live, you know, for what I wanted. I mean, I was living in a rural area. I didn't have a lot of expenses. You know, the food isn't all that much and if you don't want to go travelling or something like that, or you decide not to.

Mmm.

You can manage on it, if you have ... If you own your own house you can manage on the pension.

Mmm.

How people manage and have to pay rent, I do not know.

Mmm. Yes, I think they must find it very hard.

I'm damn sure they do.

Mmm. But so, in putting that money into the house you improved the value I suppose.

Ooh, completely, yes. I remodelled it and put in a lot of work and all my savings and eventually when I sold it ... Actually [laughs] I think I just about cleared what I'd paid for it really but you know, with all the money I'd invested, but nonetheless, it was enough to buy here, so ...

Mmm, are you saying you didn't come out of it all that well, or ...

No, I didn't come out of it all that well in that particular house. I paid too much for it in the first instance and I didn't realise quite in what a disastrous condition it was.

And coming from the mainland, from that market.

Coming from Britain too where we had building inspectors, you know.

Ohh!

This had been built in somebody's [laughing] tea half-hour I think. It was a shocker [laughing out loud] and every time I uncovered something I found something even more evil underneath [laughs].

Mmm, and you sold just before the prices started to go up.

Yeah, yes, I did.

But the value here 'd be going up anyway.

Well that's what I thought, yes, swings and roundabouts and besides which, no good crying over spilt milk and I've got enough.

Mmm, yeah.

I mean it's Pickwickian, you know, if you've got enough well that's fair enough.

Mmm.

Particularly at my age I mean for goodness sake.

You know well when you have housing, I mean and you're going to replace I mean ...

Mmm.

You replace it at that value at the time anyway so ...

Yeah, yeah. I bought ...

If it increased in value you've still, you've got to pay that to replace it.

Yeah, if you're buying and selling in the same market it doesn't make a difference does it.

No, no that's, that, that encapsulates it [laugh]).

Yeah, yeah.

So what led to you moving here?

I, I've lived alone for 35 years now, I suppose; 30 years, 30 years and, I was a little bit isolated where I was and I broke my left leg and then about 18 months later I broke my right leg, and it, I found how difficult it was trying to manage without any back up.

Mmm.

So I thought well before I get too old, after all I'm 75 now, before I get too old I'd better set myself up somewhere so that when things do go pear-shaped, as they will inevitably with increasing years, I've got some kind of support. I mean the, the nurses were very good, but they'd only come three times a week and, well you know for an hour or so. The rest of the time I had to manage on my own which wasn't easy.

Mmm and so what sort of support do you get here?

Well I've gone sick a couple of times since I've been here and the mere fact that there are people close by helps and in one emergency I did get the nurse over from the hostel to give me a bit of advice as to how to handle something.

Mmm.

And the doctor's close by.

So did the nurse come over just in, in an informal way?

Oh yes, yes.

Mmm.

We're not really entitled to any assistance there but I, I had bronchitis and it was just going on and on. No, no that wasn't it that was for my other ... Oh yes, I had violent diarrhoea and I didn't know whether I was doing the right thing or not and she gave me some advice which I followed.

Mmm, and so what do you like about living here?

The units themselves are very well designed. They're very well designed. I like the light. They're easy to maintain. There is that backup in an emergency. I know I can call on my neighbours. If I go sick then, whatever, I can say look can you pick me up some bread and milk from the shop or something like that and they will happily do it.

Mmm.

[Pause] I suppose that's it really. I do ... I, I don't have as much ... I don't have to worry about the maintenance of the building. Before I had a timber house I was constantly working on it.

Mmm.

All I've got to do now really is the garden.

Mmm and so what happens here with the maintenance?

Well the, the Association actually own the building. We've got a lifetime's tenure. That's what we pay for and they actually own the building. We pay a weekly sum to them and they maintain the, the building.

But that's a lot more affordable than rent? It's just it does cover the maintenance cost.

Yes, yeah I think it's about \$260 about every four weeks; something like that.

Mmm, and I mean do you feel like it's yours; like you can do whatever you want with it or, you know?

There is a slight reservation there. I mean I've just been doing some painting and ah, I, I, I didn't know how that would go down with the Association.

Mmm.

I didn't ask. I just did it. [Laughs.]

Inside?

Yes. I read the terms of the agreement and it wasn't ... it said I shouldn't deface the walls and I decided a coat of paint was not defacing.

[Laughs.]

So I did it.

Mmm.

Mmm. [Pause.] It's not quite the same as your own home, but it's pretty close. It's a bit like having a lease really and you know you've got to hand it back.

[Pause.] Oh I see what you mean, like yeah, at the end of the day you feel like that it needs to be handed back in a certain condition, so ...

Mmm, and also, there are some rules and regulations where they try and keep them, pari passu all the way through, so that anybody that comes in after you doesn't, one hasn't it any better than the others and also they like some kind of homogenous view from the outside, so that they've got to be relative and they ...

Mmm.

It's a religious group.

Yeah. I have heard or read that that gives more of a community feel when you have more sort of consistency in the de ... design.

Well I expect so. I expect so, yes. It's not about community here. I'd say for most people it would work. The other thing of course is by definition we're all very old.

Ah.

And that can be depressing.

Mmm.

Ah because we're reinforcing the, fact, the fact that we're old and we're beginning to fail. I mean most of us have got some sort of physical condition otherwise we wouldn't be here. We'd still be [pause] flogging along on our own.

Mmm.

So it, it does reinforce the fact that you're, you're old and failing.

Mmm.

But, that's inevitable. I don't see how you can get round that.

Mmm, yeah, so I suppose, one side of that is, you're surrounded by people who'll understand how it is for you.

That's right.

Yeah, but then again what I think what I'm hearing you saying is, you wouldn't think know that, that particular focus is a bit negative and you might like to ...

Yes, you can't ignore it, which is rather unfortunate you know. You're constantly aware of ill health and age because you're living in that kind of community.

Mmm.

One tries to ignore it but it is a very negative influence and you have to be a bit careful that it doesn't get to you and you start thinking, oh I can't do that.

Mmm, so are there any ways that you deal with that?

Yeah, I give myself a lecture about once a week.

[Laughs.]

And say, of course you could do that. Prove to me that you can't do that! [Laughs.]

Mmm.

And I fall off something [laughs heartily] and prove I can't do it [still laughing] but it, it is pernicious, you have to be a little bit careful that you, you don't, you know, allow yourself to, to slip and slide and become a bit sorry for yourself.

Mmm.

And so on.

Yeah, because thinking positively is so important ...

That, that's what I mean

Yeah.

Yes, you, you've really got to make an effort to think positively.

Mmm.

When you're living in that sort of social climate.

Mmm, so do you have any younger people in your life? I mean, do you miss having younger people in your life?

Yes I, I haven't got any at all. I've got no family at all.

Mmm, but I suppose you would have had ... Where you were before you would have had younger neighbours.

[Pause] *well, being in a very rural area, no. I didn't really have neighbours as such; had one but we weren't close or anything.*

Mmm.

Now I was still mixing with elderly people because my main point of contact was in 3A.

Oh.

And those people were elderly there. No it's just that you; you didn't look out of your window and see people crawling up the road you know, pushing a little whatsername.

[Laughs heartily.]

[Laughs.] *That ... that is very depressing.*

So, so most people here have some sort of problem getting around.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Most of them are older than me too. I'm one of the younger ones.

Yes, I was going to ask you when you said, most of us are very old, what was the youngest age here.

I don't know of course, other people say it is, but I would think I was one of the youngest.

Mmm.

At 75. Most of them are in their eighties, I think.

Mmm.

And a few are in their nineties.

Mmm.

So ... People live so damn long these days!

Mmm.

It gets very boring after a while.

[Laughs.] Well especially I suppose with current attitudes towards ageing [laughs], perhaps we need to do a bit more to liven things up a bit [laughs].

Well the thing I find the biggest problem, that's why I joined U3A, is, there's no mental stimulation.

Mmm.

And that's, that's the big problem. I mean fortunately I've, I've got ABC FM to listen to in the way of music.

It's wonderful.

And ...

I listen to it.

The library is very helpful. And there's nothing on the damn television I want to watch.

Mmm.

It's all for middle aged or under five who never did finish school. So that I, I really need, you know, some kind of mental stimulation and the U3A classes I'd been to here, I'm not impressed with at all.

Mmm, which ones were you involved in here?

Before I used to go to [name of town deleted]. I helped set it up, actually.

Oh.

*Mmm, a group of us set it up and and that worked quite well, but that's gone to the pack now, it's...
We'll all be doing cake decorating soon.*

Mmm.

It's ... become all very "water colours" and ...

Mmm.

And so on.

Is there less government support for it?

No, there's no government support for U3A.

Oh.

But, we ran out of [pause] people to teach I suppose. I used to teach myself, history basically.

So why did you run out of people to teach? Do you know?

Well after a while people ... That's the whole point of U3A, that the actual members teach each other, you know.

Mmm.

But a lot of it's to do with I think, any organisation which, it's a bit like flowers you know, they start off in a blaze of glory and they bloom and then they quietly die and fade away and then they have another spurt and so on. It happens in bowls clubs and golf clubs and you also get the politics of the, committee and that sort of thing.

Mmm, so it sometimes depends on sometimes who's involved and who keeps it going and if there are differences it can fall apart.

Mmm, yeah.

Mmm, so you don't think the demographics are affecting it at all.

No, I don't think so, no. No, I think it's just the normal ebb and flow of any organisation.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Yeah, cos I ... you know, I like the idea of U3A and I thought.

Mmm.

When I retired I'd like to be involved in it.

Yeah, well it was, it was flourishing for a long while at [name of town deleted], but it's gone to the pack at the moment.

Mmm.

It'll probably resurge but [pause] not in my time. Well anyway, I can't get to it so.

I've got no idea what time we started. So, you've said something about what you don't like about here is that you live amongst all older people with disabilities and a focus.

That's right.

On decline.

Nothing against the people themselves. It's just the position they find themselves in.

So is there anything else you don't like about living here?

Well I don't really like the noise that you get in the suburbs. I, I, did like living out on my own in the middle of some orchards and so on. I, I don't like noise very much.

[Laughing softly.] Mmm, so you find it noisy here compared with where you were living?

Well actually it's a moderately quiet one when you consider it's bang in the middle of a built-up area. But nonetheless you know you've still got to cope with other people's grandchildren and barking dogs and, and you know, loud music and that sort of thing.

[Referring to whirring noise in background.] Mmm, so there's some noise of work going on at the moment.

Pardon?

There's some work going on out here at the moment.

Yeah. Oh well ...

A machine or something I think.

Yeah, oh yeah that doesn't ... you know it's only short term. It's not bad. It's not that bad.

So is it someone doing work? Is it like a hobby thing do you know or is it from work happening to one of the units? [Seeing blank look.] You don't know. It doesn't matter.

[Getting up.] *Ah, what are they doing out there at the moment? Mmm, this is the noise you can hear. It's my dishwasher.*

Oh is that what it is? Oh, oh, huh, I thought it was some sort of machinery it's ...

[Laughing.] *Well it is machinery.* [Laughs.] *It's washing dishes.* [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

[Inaudible, drops something.] *Whoops!*

Yeah, so when you said that because to me to me it seems.

That's right.

Living in a suburb of Hobart.

Oh my gosh, yes but I must admit I am a misery in that regard. I do love living in the country where the only noises you get are natural ones. You know, the birds and

Mmm.

And other animals and things just quietly growing

Mmm, mm.

And so on, bearing in mind I was born and bred in London in the middle of whatever, I'm a real country girl [laughs].

Mmm, so when did you discover that; that you liked ...

Oh, I always ... Oh 1939 when I was evacuated I decided the country was absolutely marvellous and that's where I wanted to live but I never did manage it until about 1980.

Mmm.

But I got there in the end.

Mmm.

Got there in the end.

[Pause.] So can you tell me a bit about your neighbours? Like I mean the ones that you know best and have contact with.

Well ...

The sort of contact you have?

I don't have a lot of contact I don't think. Most of my neighbours are members of a church of one sort or another and, and so I suppose they have those communities. I'm not a believer. I made that plain to the Association when I came. I said, do you have to be a, a Christian. They said no you just ... You know, we're Christians, you just, you just have to be in need of the housing.

[Laughs.]

So, so that was all right but, it can be a bit depressing at times but no, no let me think. They're all very kind people.

Mmm, because you were saying ...

Not very inspiring.

Yeah, because you were saying yeah, you, that you had nothing against them.

Oh no, oh no, no and in fact, when I was sick one time, a woman, a woman I scarcely know, who lives over there [indicating], saw my kitchen blind hadn't come up and she came round and knocked on the door and said are you all right and I said [high pitched] no I'm not [laughing].

[Laughs.]

I mean they're very good like that.

Mmm.

And we do help each other. I mean I've been helping another couple of people and I mean they, I'm sure they' would help me out if I needed it.

Mmm.

But I don't think we've got enough in common for me to make friends with anybody here.

Mmm.

In the sense that my interests are so very different to theirs and I, most of the people here too are local people with very strong family connections.

Mmm.

Ah, lived here all their lives, and they have a [name of area deleted] view of life whereas mine is much more esoteric I think and, I get very hot under the collar about things that happen internationally or on a government level or whatever it may be and my neighbours wouldn't even know about it I don't think, let alone take an interest in it. It's, it's just a different way of thinking. So I can't really share

Mmm.

The mental side of my life with anybody here. Does that sound awfully conceited?

I understand that.

Ah.

Well, understand that from knowing a range of people myself and I know.

Yeah.

There are certain people, there's just, there's things you can't share.

That's right.

There's just no common understanding.

No there isn't and, and no interest and I get bored stiff if someone talks to me about football or cars or anything like that and I'm sure they'd be equally bored if I talked about the things that interested me so, you know, as you say, there's just no common ground there.

Mmm.

But in day-to-day contact everybody is very pleasant and, and in fact I'm surprised how pleasant people are to me at times. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] What, you feel you haven't earned it? [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *Well just lately people seem to have been rather co-operative, a little, they seem to have been pleased to see me or whatever which I thought, gee, am I doing anything different, you know.*

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *I think I must have built up a credit balance somewhere along the line that I didn't know about.* [Laughs.]

So how did you find out about this place?

Ah, I saw it in the, I think it would probably be in, in The Sunday Tasmanian or something. There was an article about it when they first started building.

Mmm.

And, I think it was after I broke the first leg and I thought well I'll, I'll just go down and see what's going on and that was when they built the first stage, the first eight units and John showed me round, [name deleted], and, I said well look I'm not ready to move yet but I will be further down the track. I'll be interested in the second stage and, by the time the second stage came along I'd broken the other leg and I thought oh look I think you'd better jump before you're pushed.

Mmm.

So that's what I did, bought this off the plan.

Oh, and so did you any opportunity to have input into some of the finishing of it or [inaudible] ...

Yes, in the sense that I asked if I ... Some of the kitchen equipment, I asked if I could have my own cooker as opposed to the ones they fitted as standard and I asked them to alter the kitchen slightly so I could put in that little dish, dish drawer, dishwasher drawer. Oh and I upgraded the, the heater from a four and a half kilowatt to a six. I think that's the only changes I made but you were allowed to do that if you got in early enough of course.

Mmm. So that was an advantage of thinking ahead.

It was. It was. Yes it paid to ... I've always planned ahead [laughs] apart from my, [laughs] my, husband. I didn't plan that at all but [laughs loudly] but my own affairs I, I plan.

Mmm.

And, and I go into it in some depth and work out alternatives and so on.

[Beeping sound.] That's the dishwasher.

Sorry, I could have turned it off. I'd forgotten we were recording this.

Oh that's ... I'm sure it'll be fine. So there's a, there's a nice feel here ... There's not a feeling that the neighbours are too close upon you, like you get in some ...

No.

Unit complexes.

No, no, no I mean bearing in mind I think probably I'm [sighs], I'm more of a private person than most, no, I don't find it intrusive at all. One is allowed privacy to a large degree.

But people's grandchildren visit? You were saying that. [Laughs.] It's more often on weekends is it, or ... [Laughs.]

Oh, [lowers voice] there was ... They did have a bit of a problem, with them actually living here but ...

Oh.

But that's been solved now.

What so there was an, issue where the parents couldn't look after some grandchildren for a while?

[Still low.] *Oh their mother came with the children.*

Oh dear, mmm.

She stayed there for three months or more.

Oh, because the housing situation has been so difficult, that's the thing. It's been happening a lot everywhere.

Well there was a personal situation with them which I don't want to discuss but, eventually I did and, and something was done about it but young boys you know are very noisy. I must say the, the advantage, after all I'm, I'm complaining about living with a lot of old people, but that does mean of course that the place is quiet.

Mmm.

I mean I, I'd probably be just as much of a misery if there were kids screaming about you know, on, on bicycles and things, so, there's swings and roundabouts really isn't there and I, I don't think I have the patience for children that I did. I have the, have the ... This is an "old" story isn't it, when you get older: "The young have no respect for their elders."

[Laughs.]

I believe there's a, there's a tomb in ancient Egypt where it says so on the walls, you know, things have gone to the pot, and children have no respect for their elders anymore [inaudible] you know.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

But ...

Yeah, as though it's a matter of your perspective at the time.

I think to a large degree there is, see but then again, there's much less discipline applied these days. There are different expectations of, of youth I think. Different expectations for everybody which the older you get, the more difficult you find to adjust to. You know, you can't help but hark back to the advantages of the system that we knew, presumably one ignores the disadvantages but, but in the sense of family patterns I think we've lost a great deal.

Mmm.

In physical comfort we've gained a great deal but psychologically I think we've lost an awful lot.

In terms of how children are raised?

In terms of family life altogether.

Yeah, mmm, so how much is it just a breakdown of family life?

Oh I think so.

Yeah, even with children acting out.

Oh absolutely, yeah. I, I don't blame the kids at all. I don't blame anybody except possibly society, for falling apart the way it has.

Mmm.

I think our emphases are on the wrong things quite frankly. We've lost the plot a bit.

[Pause.] Yeah so you're talking about, like an emphasis on, an emphasis on material possessions, and ...

Undoubtedly.

Technology.

Yes. Substitution of comfort for affection or [pause], of any kind of, of hu ... humanity really.

I suppose even compassion.

Yes. Uh, we hear a lot about humanity out the window and you favour physical comfort. I mean I enjoy physical comfort as much as the next person. Don't mistake me.

Mmm.

But it seems a pity to, to lose touch with each other and with ourselves in the process and, and I can't see that that's necessary. Why can't we have it all.

Mmm, and so have you any thoughts about what might [pause] be done about it?

[Laughs.] *I ran a, a course at U3A called the social contract and we examined all these things ah, from go to woe and broke it down into housing, transport and our conclusion at the end of it was that, that a lot of the problems are a function of size and that everything is now so huge whether it be the size of the villages or the towns in which you're living, to companies, to shops, to transport even.*

Mmm.

You think of jumbo aircraft and so on, that we lose touch. It's like a difference between a small business and a factory.

Mmm.

Everything becomes impersonal.

Yeah [inaudible].

And so a lot of the breakdown we put down to was a function of size.

Mmm.

Things are too big. We need to bring them back to a human, human level.

Mmm, so you've made a choice to live in a, a smaller township.

Oh absolutely.

Yeah.

Absolutely, yes.

And do you ... Like do you, the people you mix with socially, do they live around here or do you need to travel to socialize.

I don't have a lot of friends now so ... a lot of them have died. Some of them have moved away to be nearer to their children.

Oh yeah, that happens

And, my own family's dead and they're in Britain anyway. I don't go back to Britain anymore. I, I've got I suppose two or three really good friends. I keep in touch with them mainly by phone. I don't see much of them, but, I do from time to time, and, I'm making new ones all the time.

Mmm, so what sort of activities are you doing at the moment?

Well I'm rather ... pretty well solo activities these days. Do a lot of gardening. I've been doing some of the common gardens in the village too, because they got a bit out of hand. I read a great deal. I also [pause] paint.

Mmm.

I'm always messing about in the house. [Pause.] I have been investigating my family history and have got back just about as far as I can at this distance there's no more I can do I don't think, bearing in mind I have to do it all from here.

Mmm. What, because all your family are dead over there you don't have sufficient sort of reason to go there.

Well, that's right. I've, I rather lost interest when my youngest brother died. He was 16 years younger than me and he died of cancer ten years ago and, I was really, he was quite interested but nobody else is [pause]. And it's something you need to share really when you find out something new you get excited about it and I mean I've become a thundering bore to my friends. So I try not to talk.

Mmm.

About it.

So you've written a lot of this up?

Mmm. Yes.

And there are, like genealogical societies, or there's the Internet.

Well I use the Internet quite a bit. Yes I use the computer quite a bit. Also I've, I'm the representative of the residents and when things go wrong I approach the Association and try and get it sorted.

Mmm, so if there's a problem they come to you, and you, you know sort of represent them on a range of issues.

Yeah, and, and sort of small things you know and you get the odd cooker that breaks down or whatever and ...

Chase it ...

I chase it up and make sure it's fixed and so on.

Mmm, so all the things like light globes, leaky taps.

Mmm. They deal with all those things?

Mmm.

So, so you, you don't have to replace light globes.

No, in theory we should but in practice we can't possibly get up there anyway and at the moment they're replacing them but under the terms of our contract we should pay for those bulbs.

Mmm, but, what, they're paying for them?

Well, at the moment they are, yeah, mainly because they haven't got round to asking for the money, I think.

Mmm.

And we don't know how much they are anyway.

Huh, so there's a maintenance person who's here.

Yes, yes, and we're, we're entitled to six hours a week of his work, which doesn't go far.

So all of the units?

Mmm, all of the units together and that includes all the gardens.

Mmm.

And uh ...

And so you get to identify what he does?

[Inaudible, sniff.]

So is he ...

Well, it's working quite well. We've got a sort of arrangement and, and we're working together quite well.

So is he a contractor or does he work for the Assoc ...

No. He lives here.

Oh.

He lives in the house on the place.

Oh, so he's actually a resident?

No, no. He's a younger man who looks after it [inaudible].

Oh, sort of like a caretaker job. So he lives here.

Yeah.

He does six hours of maintenance.

Yeah.

But apart from that he lives his own life.

No, he, he works for the hostel, basically.

Mmm.

And does a lot of work.

Oh.

He's employed full-time.

Mmm, and I guess it's convenient for him.

Mmm.

And.

Mmm.

For the Association.

Most of his work is at the hostel though, but we're entitled to six hours a week, so. I chase him up when people want things done, but he's pretty helpful.

Mmm, so are you planning to make any changes around here, or to your housing in general?
Or do you think you'll just stay here?

I'll stay here till I die now.

Oh.

That was the whole idea. I was hoping to ... Because we've got complete security here, there's no question about that. I was hoping to close, close the unit up and perhaps go visiting, that sort of thing, but I've got two cats. And ...

You mean to travel?

Yes.

And where would you travel?

Well not very far because I ended up with deep vein thrombosis last time I travelled.

Oh.

Because I broke a leg, but yes, I was planning to do that but as I say, my two cats, although they're as old as me, they just seem to be going on and on and you can't leave them for a week or two at a time.

Mmm.

I mean my neighbours would feed them. I know there's lots of ...

Mmm, yeah so ...

But I have got someone coming at the end of August. She's going to give me a fortnight. She's going to come and house sit for me.

Mmm, and that'll be different because then they'll be able to come in and out.

Yeah, they're, they're in and out all the time.

Yeah, so if your neighbour fed them would they just stay out?

Well, well I don't even kn ... It wouldn't work because they panic even if I go away for the day. They, they haunt me the following day. You know if I go up to Hobart and I'm out the entire day, the next day every time I move out the room the follow me [laughs] so ...

How old are they?

Sixteen I think now. Yes, 16, just 16, which is quite an age for a cat.

Yeah, getting quite elderly.

Mmm.

And so is there any way that you think this housing could be improved?

The actual housing, no I don't think there is. I'm very impressed with the design of the unit. I'll show you before you go. I, I really think the people who designed these units are, are due for an award.

Mmm.

Because they're ... They are designed on the passive solar principle really.

Mmm.

And, and they've, they've all got their, their big window facing North. They've got these little sitting out areas here and yet they're staggered so that we're not peering into each other's houses.

Mmm.

The latest stage I think they did make a mistake. They crammed in a couple of extra ones and they've put them too close and I think they've probably learnt from that and they won't try and do that again.

Because they're probably running out of options on the site, and there's a demand for it.

Well it was. There's such a high demand. We are building a few more in the paddock down there. There's going to be another three down there, so they won't be too close together.

Mmm.

And we've just bought the corner house there.

Mmm.

And that will be knocked down and we'll build eventually there.

Mmm.

And also they're going to extend the hostel and that's desperately needed, desperately needed.

Mmm, yeah.

Because we're all getting older and in fact there's a couple that really should be over there.

Mmm.

And the idea is of course that when you get completely gaa-gaa, you go over there.

Mmm.

And they look after you.

Yeah, and so people here will get first option on a place?

Well I would imagine we'd get the fast, the fast lane, yes, because after all it's to the Association's advantage. I mean once we move over there, this, this unit then becomes free and they can sell it again.

Mmm, yes it's a good model in many ways in terms of, being able to ...

I think they've thought it through very well. I really do. I really do.

Mmm. Yeah, being able to provide I suppose what is quite affordable housing and to be able to keep putting new units of accommodation ...

Exactly.

On the ground.

Yes, yes, obviously they're financially viable.

Mmm.

And they are you know, financially viable for us, so if you own your own home then you can afford to buy one of these, if you sell that.

Yeah, mmm, yes so I don't, I don't know how much it costs to buy in. It was \$100,000 odd was it? It's more than \$100,000 isn't it?

Oh it is now. It goes up of course with the ...

With the, the values?

Yes and after all, the cost of building's constantly rising too.

Mmm. Well things have just about doubled I think.

Mmm, yes, mmm, I know the new ones are costing somewhere like \$135,000.

Mmm, but as long as it's the sa ... As you say, the same market, as long as someone's selling the house in this market to buy in ...

It's not unreasonable in the market, no. It's not unreasonable. And when you consider the cost of some of these other retirement places, they are absolutely astronomical.

Yeah, so this is, being a non-profit organisation and a Christian organisation ...

It has. It has.

It's, yeah ...

It really is very good value; very good value and they're very reasonable people. Only getting a decision out of them is not always easy but then they're all volunteers and they work for nothing, apart from the, the salaried staff of course, but ...

Yeah, they've been doing it for a very long time.

Mmm. Yeah I, I give them credit. I think they do very well.

Mmm. So I had just a few more questions but I think you've almost answered them ... Like, what does growing older mean to you. I think you've already...

It's 'orrible! [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

I can't recommend it. [Laughing.]

[Laughing.] And now, do you feel people treat you differently now that you're older?

[Sigh.] *I don't know. Sometimes, occasionally someone makes the mistake of treating me as though I'm five.*

[Laughs.]

And get a little bit sharp if they do.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs heartily.]

Put them in their place. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *Well I have one ...*

I think you need to.

Well I have been known to, to really be sharp but that was only when I was, I had good reason to be angry. (Sniffs.) No, as a general rule I, I'm treated with a reasonable amount of respect, I think.

Mmm.

And acceptance ...

I suppose the residents and staff here would, would be [inaudible].

I must say the staff here on the whole are very good ... I think it might be rather ... It's very difficult. I couldn't do their job over at the hostel. I could not do it. Some of the residents there are very far gone.

Yes.

And I, I can't ... I suppose I feel it more than the younger ones over there because you look at it and you think, is that what the future's going to be.

Yeah.

I'm a member of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society and, I don't intend to get into that condition.

Mmm.

But and, and they are a bit you know, sort of patronizing, matronising them.

Mmm.

Which I suppose would be inevitable. I suppose I would do the same thing.

Yeah, I suppose when a person isn't "there" it's very hard to know how to relate to them, if they sort of ...

I, I don't know how those women do that work. I admire them tremendously. I, I have difficulty dealing with people who mentally are, are no longer fully functioning.

Mmm.

Ah, I think physical incapacity I can handle but mental incapacity I can't.

And so tell me about the Voluntary Euthanasia Society.

Oh well, it's just a society that's devoted to attempting to get the law changed so that one can ...

[Tape stopped.]

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How long have you lived here?

Thirteen years.

And where did you live before you moved here?

I was living in [name of town deleted].

And what led you to move here?

[Sniffs and giggles.] *The fact that I didn't fit in with the community, or the community didn't fit in with me in Scamander.*

Oh.

So I gave it up.

Oh, so how long were you in [name of town deleted]?

Six years.

Mmm, and so was that a lifestyle choice?

[Name of town deleted]?

Mmm.

Well it had been. I gave up ... I, I left my ... I had a very big job teaching.

Mmm.

And I could no longer put up with the shenanigans of headmasters so I gave up my job and one of my sons was living on the coast so I decided to move from [name deleted] and go down the coast.

Mmm, and so it must be quite a small community.

Oh, it's a dreadful community. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Mmm.

They don't like single women. [Laughs.]

Oh, so it's a very conservative community.

Mmm.

Mmm, mmm, and so can you tell me about moving here then?

Tell you about moving here. Well, I got my sons to come and pack up my furniture. I managed to sell my little place I'd bought which was just a little cottage which I'd done up. They collected my furniture and we put it underneath somebody's house, because I'm talking about 13, 14 years ago when house prices were minimal, very minimal, so selling the place in [name of town deleted], I didn't have enough money to buy another house. I only had enough money for half a house.

Mmm.

So I came to Hobart and I lived ... I s ... spent a few months with a friend and one of my, my middle son, was doing up a cottage in [name deleted] Street and I just announc ... announced to him [laughing] that I was coming to live with him. He wasn't terribly pleased.

Mmm.

And after I'd been there a few months my eldest son decided I ought to buy a house and that he ... He just announced. He didn't ask my other son.

Mmm.

He just said, we'll pay, help you to pay the mortgage.

Oh right.

And so I bought this house but the point about all that was that I ... When, I, I was due to inherit a little bit of money so that took about 18 months and when I inherited the money I just paid for the house.

Mmm, ah so then they didn't have to pay the mortgage.

No.

Mmm.

I only paid them, I can't, I don't remember. I think it was about a year or just a bit more than a year that they actually helped me to pay the mortgage.

Mmm, so you were very close to the line with your housing.

Well I was, yes.

Mmm, and did you ... Is that because ... Did you trade down to go to [name deleted] and then did you lose equity?

No, no, no, I mean houses in ... I had a most beautiful house in, in [name of town deleted], which I'd ...

Mmm.

I'd sold for, now in ninety something ... Oh no, I think it was less than that. I think it was somewhere, \$50,000, down there ... Only you know, \$50,000 or \$60,000 because houses ... I'm talking ...

Is this nineteen twenty years ago you're talking about?

I'm talking ... Yeah, just think, I was here, I've been in Hobart 14 years ...

Mmm.

And six, that's 20.

Mmm.

So it was, yeah it was 20 years ago.

Yeah.

And the price of houses was ridiculous, you know.

Mmm.

In terms ... And coming from [name of town deleted], with a little old cottage to Hobart. Anyway, but I knew that I, that one day I'd inherit this bit of money which was just ... I had the money from the cottage; the \$50,000 from the cottage, and I inherited about enough money to pay the h ... Pay for the house, which was \$105,000 I think I paid \$105,000.

Mmm.

So that was that.

Yeah, because once you're on a retirement income ...

I've got no retirement income.

Oh.

I'm only on a, on a pension, age pension.

Mmm.

I've got no income because, you know, I was a teacher in the years when first of all you were supposed to have a husband ...

Mmm.

And second of all, it was only about 1972 when women got equal pay.

Mmm.

And by 1985 when I got ... Well however old I was ...

You retired in 1985?

No, I retired in 1988.

Mmm.

And I had no, no, what do you call it? Pension. I didn't have a teaching pension because they didn't... They ... I had it ... I'd gone into the teaching pension system.

Mmm.

And I was in it for 12 years.

Mmm.

And I came out with it, with \$45,000.

Mmm.

I mean I could have, I could have had that as a pension you know. It would have been three dollars a week or something.

Mmm.

So I just took the money and ... Actually I ... It was very good that I took the money.

Mmm

I got one of my, one of my sons took the ... When I got the money I didn't need it.

Mmm.

Because I had a little bit of savings, you know, I didn't actually need the money, so I lent it to him and he has made, financially so well out of it that I'm glad I did it.

So he established a business?

Yeah. Just in a ... Yeah, he's done very well and that, and gave me back the money back.

Mmm. Yeah, it's a good son isn't it?

Well it's great.

Mmm.

Wonderful, I ... You know, I mean it made two people ... I got the money back more or less when I needed it and, he had used it to great ... Because he was very lucky and housing prices have soared and that's what happened, very lucky.

Mmm. Well so, you said you retired in '88,

'88.

So were you teaching in [name of town deleted]?

I taught in [name of town deleted] for two years.

Oh.

In the most obnoxious ... with the most obnoxious principal that you could ever come across...

Mmm.

And I just wasn't going to put up with it anymore.

Mmm.

So I just walked out. I literally walked out.

So did you retire early?

Yeah.

Mmm.

Well what happened was, I was very lucky. 1988 there was still the widow's pension.

Mmm.

And I went to the Department and said I wanted to be retired and started you know, and I told them I wanted to be retired on health grounds.

Mmm.

Because I was going to say, it was truly really, but if I kept on working my mental health would be absolutely terrible.

Mmm.

And, anyway, I can't remember the ins and outs, but finally somebody in the Department said to me, which was very amazing really, why do you want to retire on health grounds for. You've got children haven't you? I mean my children are over 40 now, because...

Mmm.

So in 1988 they were quite grown up.

Mmm.

I said yeah, I've got children. You're divorced aren't you? Well you can go on the Widow B pension.

Mmm.

Because I wasn't 65.

Oh, yeah, mmm.

I think I was 58.

Mmm.

I was very lucky, so I went on that until I was 60 and then I went on the age pension.

Mmm. Yeah, so what's your view now of the ... Because people go on the dole don't they.

Well that's pretty bad. If they're not 60, whatever it is now.

Yeah, 62 it was but I think it keeps creeping up.

It goes up every year.

Yeah, mmm.

Yeah. Uh, what's my view? [Laughs.] I don't, I mean, I think that ... Well I mean, you know, there's a whole lot of other things into that. My husband marched off and left me with three children and refused to give me any money.

Mmm.

But it didn't matter so much. I had a very good job in the Education Department.

Mmm.

But besides, but, but when it came to my giving up my job, I was left ... You know, people are left in the lurch and my ...

Yeah, so you had to work for the sake of the children, as long as they were dependent on you.

Absolutely.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Mmm.

I mean, you know. I mean not that that mattered. I'd have worked anyway.

Mmm.

But, it made it very difficult because I've, I got caught in that gap between you know having a pension, having a pension, being in a pension plan.

Mmm, for women.

For women.

Yeah.

So I mean it's very difficult for women now, I mean I taught, I taught for just on 30 years all together and I had three children in the middle of all that.

Mmm.

You know and I went, when I came to Tasmania, I went back to work and I had a two year old and a three year old and an eight year old and they gave me a job out in the sticks you know.

Mmm. Oh, that was you came here as a single mother?

No, no, I came here with my husband actually but ...

Well how could they give you a job out in the sticks? You mean you had to travel?

Yup.

Mmm.

They gave me a job at [name of town deleted].

Ah.

And I mean that, the only reason I was very lucky, was that I was living at [name of town deleted]. We lived at [name of town deleted].

Mmm.

And I was lucky because two women, one of whom was a nurse, decided to start a child minding centre.

Mmm.

And that's how I managed to manage it.

Mmm, yeah because there wouldn't have been too many options at [name of town deleted] [laughing] for childcare.

No.

Mmm, mmm, yeah so that's a major worry for women too, isn't it.

Oh, it's impossible. Well I mean, I ... You know, you listen to all the talk and the government at the moment has said ok they want women to go back to work when their child's six and they've realised that you need more childcare.

Mmm.

But where and how?

Yeah.

And how much?

And when? [Laughs.]

Yes.

Yes, yeah and how can women plan for that without knowing that it's going to be available too?

And I mean, and on top of all that well it's, you go out and get a job if you're a woman or even if you're a young person and they say right come tomorrow afternoon from two till four and then and then come next week on Wednesday afternoon from one till two. I mean how can anyone have a life like that?

And so what sort of work is that?

Well girls who work in shops and ...

Oh, you mean they have to just work flexible hours.

Very flexible. So flexible that it's hardly a job. I mean you hear about people working three jobs in order to make a living.

Yeah and then you've got to juggle ...

What it does when you've got children ... I mean I worked in [name of suburb deleted] for seven or eight years, and what it does to you when you've got no money is horrendous.

So you mean were you doing relief teaching at [name of suburb deleted]?

No I was the, I was the assistant ... What do you call it? I was the senior [laughs], not the principal but the vice principal.

Oh, goodness me.

I was the vice principal.

At [name of suburb deleted]?

Primary School. Not Primary, [name of suburb deleted]. They've closed it now.

Oh, and so ...

We had, we had, then they built [name of suburb deleted]. We had 600 children at the school.

Mmm.

I had twelve teachers in the infant department. It was enormous.

Mmm.

And they built this whole new set up of houses, without a shop or a bus or you know.

Public housing?

Public housing.

Mmm, yeah so you're not necessarily speaking about direct personal experience about women having to work flexible hours but you know women who are in that situation?

Well I mean, no, I don't know anybody actually come to think of it. I don't know of people these days but just in my local, the local shop in [name deleted] you know, two or three months ago I looked round and ... because they employ a huge range of people. It's a very big, has a very big clientele, [name deleted] grocery.

Mmm.

And all the faces had changed and they were all young.

Mmm.

And you know I don't know, they're not there all the time.

Yes I do wonder how young people survive in that sort of job because you wouldn't think that they'd be paid, they'd be paid the absolute minimum wage I would say.

No well I'm particularly friendly with one of the assistants in the shop.

Mmm.

Who's been there quite a long time and she is buying a house. She would be 24, something like that. She's buying a house and she works however many days a week and, and for a long time she also worked in a restaurant at the weekends.

Oh yeah.

And I mean she, I don't know what kind of a life you can have.

Mmm.

If you're always going to work.

Mmm, yeah I suppose you're working for the day when it won't be necessary, you know.

When's that?

I don't know.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] But, so you didn't ... You're not, not from Tassie? You came from elsewhere?

Oh, I'm from England.

Oh, of course.

I, I married an Australian in England.

Oh.

And I came to Australia in 1963, so I've lived in Australia longer than I lived in England.

Mmm.

And I've lived in Adelaide, Melbourne and Launceston and Hobart.

Mmm.

But I wouldn't live anywhere else.

Mmm, and how old were your children when you were left on your own with them?

Five, six and thirteen.

Mmm, and did your, your husband did he go back? Where did he go? He left?

Oh he was an Australian. He, he, he went ...

Oh.

He's now back in England married again with another child.

Mmm, because he was working in England when you met him I suppose?

He wasn't. He was a backpacker.

Ohh! Goodness me. [Laughs.]

I can't remember actually. I can't remember. He was a good worker. He did all sorts of things.

Mmm, so it's interesting that you met him there and he's ended up there and you've ended up here, isn't it. [Laughs.]

Mmm, yeah but I wouldn't like to go ... I've been back to England quite a number of times but I couldn't live there.

Mmm.

Once you've lived in, in Hobart, particularly when you've lived somewhere like this, where the sun shines in [sigh] you know, it would be very difficult to leave.

Mmm, so even though people on the mainland complain about the climate here...

Mmm.

In comparison to England it's ...

My next door neighbour's just been widowed, and she's American and, and she said ... She told me last week or the week before that she was consid ... She considered ... She's got two children in America, married children in America, considered going back but she said she didn't think she could cope with all the traffic ...

And the pace, mmm.

When she was there a couple of years ago she didn't drive. She didn't feel competent to drive.

Because they drive so fast.

Mmm.

On the expressways.

And she's a bit younger than me, you know.

Mmm.

So I mean, there's another person who ... So you have to, when you live in Tasmania, you have to accept its faults.

Mmm.

And, and wallow in it's nice things. [Laughs.]

Mmm, yeah, so what do you like about living here then?

Well in Tasmania, or here on this table?

Well, a bit of both, whatever, you know the big picture and then here specifically.

Well, here specifically in this house ...

Mmm, yeah.

Because it's quiet. I've got ... It's fantastic. I've got the bush behind me. It's [name deleted] right behind there.

Mmm.

And it's quiet I supp ... Quiet and it's ... A great deal of light in this house, which I find is very important.

Mmm.

It's very comfortable, very comfortable. It's only a small house. It's very, very comfortable.

Mmm, it's a very nicely designed house, yeah. Is this a ... There was a time when there was a lot of emphasis on light, designing for light.

This is ... This house was built in 1961.

Right, mmm.

And, and ... You should look. Even my next-door neighbour, the very first time she ever came up, she couldn't believe, because she's, she's there, next door to me like that, and she couldn't believe the difference because of the view. Everybody ... I mean the view is magnificent here.

Mmm, it is. It is. I couldn't believe it when I drove up.

Yeah.

And realised you just had this view right down over Hobart.

Mmm.

And the river.

Mmm. It's wonderful.

Mmm.

And that's what I like about this particular house. I'd never lived in a house that was as young as this before. I'd always gone for old places.

Mmm.

Oh yes I have actually, I'm telling a lie now I think about it.

Mmm.

We had a new house in Adelaide but I just came and looked at it and thought, yes I could live there.

Mmm.

And I'm not overlooked and in Hobart that's quite amazing.

Yes, it is. You overlook rather than ...

Yeah.

Are overlooked.

Mmm.

Mmm, yeah, so you'd think that ... You know, it's a prime site really. You'd think that ...

It'd be worth something one ... Oh no it won't.

I think it must be worth something now.

Well it is. It's at least, well at least doubled what I paid for it.

Mmm.

But I mean you can't ... I don't want to go anywhere else but if you did, it wouldn't be worth it because you'd have to pay a lot more to move wouldn't you.

Yeah, yeah so you'd have to end up with something a bit cheaper because of all the costs.

Yeah.

Yeah, and this house down here, I mean, that's for sale I think.

No it's the next one.

Oh is it?

That one there's for sale.

I saw the sign, yeah. But ...

That one ...

Mmm.

That one sold about.

Mmm.

I think about two years ago, for over \$400,000.

Mmm, but they don't have what your house has.

Oh yes, that's got a pretty good view, that one.

Oh has it?

Yes but you can't see it. It's got windows all along that side.

Ah.

And, but no this house is the highest house in the street.

Mmm.

It's just luck, that was.

Yeah so, when you were buying what, you know, what influenced your choice to buy this one.

Well mmm, all those things I've just mentioned to you was very, well part of it and the other thing is there's a bus route. It's not very frequent. It's about every hour in [name deleted] Road, which is, so I could, so if I was incapacitated, you know I had to walk with a walking stick or something I could walk down.

Mmm.

Get the bus, and I could get the bus back. It's a very ... It's a very big hill though. You'd be surprised if you walked up it.

Mmm.

And ...

The [name deleted] Road hill?

This house, this hill as well. When you walk up it, it's a hill and, so I could walk down you know if I was incapacitated so you would, you would be able to live here, if you understand what I mean.

Yeah. So you did think of that when you bought it?

Oh absolutely.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Mmm.

Yes, and the other thing is about living here is it's very close to the city and I use the Library a lot, and so that's, it was important to me and the cinema you know.

Mmm.

The one in North Hobart, The State, so I thought of those, the needs you would have, you know, as you got older.

Mmm.

And, I mean I've lived, I've lived in, you know as I've said I lived at [name deleted] once. I've lived at [name deleted] on the beach and that was all right, I'd just get in the car and go to [name deleted] to go shopping. It took an hour and a half, but I couldn't that, you know, as an older person.

Mmm.

So there you go and two of my sons live ... One of my sons lives in the next street [pointing and laughing] down there.

Mmm.

And the other one lives just off [name deleted] Crescent.

So you've got three sons?

I've got two here and one lives on the mainland.

Mmm and do you feel safe here?

Oh quite safe. In terms of you know, being, having a problem in terms of interlopers, that sort of safeness?

Well I don't know because I suppose different people feel safe for different reasons don't they.

Mmm.

So some people might feel unsafe if they feel there's no one they could go to when the needed help for example, or they might feel unsafe because there might be stairs that you know, worry them.

There's no stairs in this house at all.

Mmm.

It's quite safe. The only thing I've, in terms of being safe is that I've now... Oh well I think I've always had it. I've got two screen doors on the back, both of which lock and I always have the door, the front door open when it's sunny and I just lock the screen door so that you know if somebody knocks at the door that I don't know.

Mmm.

I can see them and hear them and make decision about anything.

Mmm, I mean one of the good things about it is you've got such a good vision of who's approaching the place.

Actually yeah, as long as you happen to see it from here, it's a bit more difficult up there but anyway yes and uh ...

What from the bedroom?

Yes because I've got a lot of trees and bushes and things. I'll show you if you want to see. I mean.

Yeah.

But that part I feel safe. About ... I wouldn't have any compunction about knocking ... In fact I've actually knocked on somebody's door for help.

Mmm.

I've got an automatic garage door downstairs.

Oh really. So you can just drive straight in at night.

Yes. It's got a light.

Mmm.

And on one occasion, quite a while ago, I ... What happened was I parked, I didn't go into the garage far enough and when the door came down it was right against the bumper.

Mmm.

No I think that was before I had an automatic ... It was before I had it automated.

Mmm.

It was when it was a lift up door, that's right.

Mmm.

And I couldn't open the door because it was ... And so I just walked down the and ... I knocked on somebody's door, a guy down the road. I'd spoken to him. Oh no, I'd collected money for the Red Cross and that's how I'd spoken to him, so I didn't have any compunction. So I think I could do it.

Mmm.

For other things too.

Yeah, so do you know any of your neighbours here?

Not very well. I mean there's two or three. I know my next-door neighbour.

Mmm.

That house is now rented and the house next door to next door is now rented. I used to...

Mmm.

When it wasn't I knew the people that had that you know, quite well. [Sigh.] I wave to a few people but I'm, there's ano ..., there's a block of flats there and the people change in that block.

I saw, I saw those letterboxes as I came up.

Yeah. They change, and the house next door to that is also let.

Mmm, mmm, so are these ... Are there investors, mainland investors perhaps?

Ah no, this one belongs ... is an investment but it's not mainland, it's here. And, those people I knew but they've just gone into nursing homes.

Oh.

The son's put the house on the market.

Mmm.

But, I haven't got friendships with anybody if you see what I mean.

Yeah, which not many people do ...

And anyway you know this little round bit here is cut off from the rest of the street sort of thing.

Yeah, yeah, it is a ... It's a little cul de sac, so you'd think ... You'd expect to get to know the neighbours here.

Yeah, yeah well I do, yeah.

Yeah.

But ...

But if they're rental ...

I think all the people, I think when I first came here were all mostly older people.

Mmm-mmm because it's an inner suburb I guess.

Yeah the people had lived here for years, yeah.

Yeah, but there's been a lot of changes.

Yeah, but not necessarily for the better because they had students living in there.

Mmm, and so in what period have those changes happened?

Oh, about four years, three or four years.

It started happening three or four years ago?

Mmm.

Mmm, and so there's no students there now?

No. They ... I think they must have found that having students was a nuisance because they kept, I don't know you know, stay for six months and then go or something.

Yeah.

I don't know what exactly. And so this time, because the people next door told, the people who are renting told me, they rented it for a year so that was probably easier for them, suits the people who own the house better.

Rather than a six-month lease.

Mmm, mmm.

And I suppose, were the students noisy?

Well, yes, both that house that I told you about over there that I told you is rented, they had students and they had students and they were both noisy, very noisy.

Mmm.

And due to the configuration of this little road people want to turn round when they come in.

Mmm.

And they, they all want ... It's all my driveway got, gets turned round in but [name deleted] who owns that house has obviously told the people that live there now not to do, not to turn round in my drive, because somebody nearly ran me over.

Who?

I was coming down the path and this guy backed in, one of the students.

Ah, so you've had a lot of coming and going with a number of students.

For a while yes but I think in any, in any case although I didn't like it at all, eventually both sets of people who are renting discovered that having students wasn't re ... It wasn't the place to have students.

Ah.

My son said that. You should ... They've chosen the wrong place to, you know, to have students because it's ah, because of the other people that live around you know.

Mmm, and so, the other residents were actually complaining to the owners and the owners were aware of that?

I don't whether they did.

It's also a fair way from the uni. Yeah, I suppose ...

Oh it's not very far really. People could walk from here to the uni, but I, I don't know. I complained like mad. In fact I complained eventually to the Council and they were really, really good the Council.

Mmm.

The environment department I think it was and they actually came round and threatened, [laughs] well not threatened, and said that if ... Knocked on the door and spoke to them and said that if there were anymore complaints that they would be fined or something like that.

Mmm. And was that for a noise nuisance.

Yeah.

Mmm, mmm.

And that ... So I was quite ... You know, I was ... That was good.

Mmm and so with the neighbours who are now on the longer term leases, I mean is there less of a sense that it's, you know, they're going to be people who are going to be around. Is that why you sort of, like you don't feel like their neighbours in the same way as the longer term residents.

No, I don't ... People, people don't communicate with other people these days. I mean I ... We communicate when there's ... When I'm coming in or when they're coming in and I'm out there, we talk, you know.

Mmm.

I mean I dare say you could get more friendly if you wanted to, but I don't actually particularly want to.

Mmm.

You know.

Mmm.

I've come to the time in my life where I'm quite happy with my own company and when I'm not happy with it [laughs] I'll make my own choices about what I'm going to do.

Mmm, mmm, and so what don't you like about living here?

Nothing I don't ... There's nothing that puts me off living here at all, nothing.

Mmm, so the house is easy to look after. You don't find it hard to look after?

[Clears throat.] *I'll show you if you want to see it, mmm.*

Yeah I will, but when we're finished. And you have all the services you need? You can access all the services you need from here?

Because I've got very good children, I mean my middle son in particular, considers that he looks after me, you know.

Mmm, is that the one who ...

That's the one who, who used my money to set himself up.

Mmm, and then helped you buy the house.

Well they both helped me buy the house because the other son's, you know, in South Australia, well so no he didn't have anything to do with it. They're both very good. They'll come at a moment's notice, mmm.

Mmm, yeah, so how different is it living here from what you thought it would be. I mean did you have any expectations of what it would be like when you moved here, and ...

No. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

No I didn't ... No, I don't think I thought about it. I just knew ... I, I knew that I couldn't live comfortably, intellectually and mentally, and without having ... being able to access you know, various cultural things.

Mmm.

And intellectual things.

Mmm.

So, I knew that I would get, more or less get that when I came to Hobart. I mean it's not London or New York ...

Mmm.

But it's, better than [name of town deleted].

Laughs. Yeah, so is there anything better than you expected about living here.

Well only the sunshine.

It is lovely. I'm enjoying it.

[Laughs.] *I can't ...*

Yeah.

Have you noticed my plant [pointing to a large, thriving begonia]?

Mmm, oh it's beautiful. Yes, it really does enjoy the warmth here.

Mmm.

It's absolutely thriving. It's beautiful.

Mmm, it's a begonia.

Mmm.

There's another one. See the one with the orange flowers out there.

Yeah.

Well that's been flowering for three months.

Mmm, mm.

No it's fine. I've got a garden that I'm, that I have more or less made easy.

Mmm.

And it's fine, living here.

Mmm.

I wouldn't want to go anywhere else.

Yeah, and can you think of any ways that your housing situation here might be improved.

Anything that would ...

What do you mean, in terms of space or ...

Well, you know, whatever you feel, to better meet you know your needs or whatever as you're growing older, or just to make your life more comfortable now.

No. I couldn't be bothered. I couldn't be bothered to do anything more to the house. I mean it's very comfortable. It's got everything that you need in it.

Mmm.

It's quite easy to heat. Well part of it's easy to heat. This part of it's easy to heat.

Mmm.

And, you know I could think ... If I'd designed the house I'd have done different things with the kitchen.

Mmm.

If I'd have designed the house or built the house I'd have done, I'd have made more space here in the dining room.

Mmm.

But I mean whose going to be bothered at my age.

Mmm, because this is nicest area to sit isn't it.

Mmm.

Yeah, and what about ... It's weatherboard though. I mean, is painting it an issue?

I don't know. It was painted as I moved into the house. The person who owned it had it painted.

Mmm.

That's the weather wall and my son, [name deleted], keeps on telling me he's going to paint it, [laughs] so no it's not a pr ... It doesn't, it doesn't ... Apart from that wall, it actually, the outside paint's in a very good condition. So I've been here thirteen years. It's not bad.

Mmm. And what sort of heating have you got?

Gas.

Mmm. And you find that's cheap to run?

No.

Or, affordable?

Is anything cheap?

No.

No, it costs. Wait for it, \$89 a cylinder.

Huh, and how long does a cylinder last?

Six weeks.

Mmm.

But it's not every ... Six weeks in the cold, yeah.

Mmm.

Five or six weeks in the cold, but I mean I, I only buy gas in six or seven months of the year so, I mean I've got to have heating.

Mmm.

I feel the cold.

Mmm, yeah, it can get very cold here.

So I don't care really.

Mmm, so you're not thinking of moving either. You wouldn't.

Wouldn't dream of it. [Laughs.] Where would I go? [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Mmm, yeah well I mean one of the options is, some people think of moving to a villa in a retirement complex or something like that.

Not me. I'd go mad.

Mmm.

No, no. I just thought of something. What I, I'm, again, one of my sons, says he's going to do it but it'll happen fairly soon if he doesn't then I'll have to have someone. I've got to have rails put by the steps, up. You know.

Oh yeah.

There's a step up there and there's a step up this side. And also in the back garden, I need to have those sorts of things you know.

Mmm. And so is that going to be very costly to do if you...

Not if [son's name deleted] does it.

Oh, he's going to do it ...

Well he says he is but I don't know whether he's going to have time, but I mean it doesn't matter whether it's ... I, I've now come to the conclusion that if I need it I'll have it.

Yeah, and, and that sort of thing may even be available through some sort of government program. You never know.

Perhaps it is. Perhaps, when I'm 75 or something.

If you got an occupational therapist to look at it, I suppose and...

I think if ... When you're 74 or 75 ...

That's right.

They do a survey don't they?

Yeah and ...

Well it's only next year so I could wait I suppose.

Yeah and then people become eligible for more services.

And there's one other thing I might do. I might consider doing.

Mmm.

I've got a separate laundry. There's only two bedrooms in this house. I've got a separate laundry and I thought. I haven't got to the point of considering actually doing it, of turning the laundry into another bathroom with a walk-in shower.

Mmm.

Because I've got a shower over the bath.

Oh and you want, walk-in might be ...

I'm quite happy about the getting over the bath bit but who knows.

Yeah, yeah so that's something you mightn't do but it's an option that's there.

Yeah and my idea was that I would then, if it was ever necessary, I could have somebody living here, in, having that room. It's a very nice room.

Oh so the, the bedroom's ...

There [indicating the other side of the kitchen]. It's got the sun as well, different times of the day.

So you could have that room ...

I, I could have somebody living there, you know, to be in the house and we wouldn't have to share a bathroom.

Mmm, yes, which is one source of conflict when you share.

Well also, my reason isn't so much the conflict is but the, shower is right behind my bed.

Oh.

So when somebody turns it on late at night, I can hear it and that's really what I'm ...

Or going to the toilet too.

Well the toilet's separate.

Oh right.

That's ok.

Mmm.

It's ... 'Cos I, I've had ... Both my sons have lived here on and off, for a few months at different times, you know and my eldest son spends a very long time in the shower [laughs].

Yeah, so it's your eldest and the second one who live here, and the younger one lives away somewhere?

Yes, in Hobart. Yes, my youngest son's away.

Mmm. Mmm, yeah, so you have no thought of living in a retirement type unit?

Absolutely not.

Mmm.

First of all it's far too expensive.

Mmm.

And I've had, I've had a little bit of experience with the people who, who live in those homes. I have a friend who died last August in a home, in a nursing home, and I've got, I don't believe they know what they're doing.

In the nursing home?

Mmm, I mean some of them might, just the one I was in there was no staff.

Mmm.

Oh, and it was just unbelievable what happened.

What do you think she died sooner than she should have?

Oh absolutely.

Mmm.

But apart from that bit, the care was very minimal.

Oh.

And the most excruciating thing was, that when they went in to have a meal they sat down and the people, the carers if you call them, the carers immediately put bibs on everybody.

Oh.

Now if that doesn't tell you what their mental state of consideration is.

Mmm.

I'd like to know what does.

So your friend completely had her wits about her.

Absolutely.

But she just had poor health.

Absolutely, yeah, mmm.

Yeah it's very institutionalised isn't it?

Oh it's terrible.

And also demeaning.

Very demeaning.

Infantilising in fact.

Yes. Terrible, I mean they wouldn't be able to do it to me unless I had complete Alzheimers so I didn't know anything about what was going on.

Mmm.

I would be so stroppy they wouldn't want me.

Mmm, and so do you find people treat you differently now that you're older?

Yes.

Mmm.

You can stand and wait in a shop and they don't see you. That happened to me the other day.

[Laughs.] *And somebody said are you being served and I said no and about six people ran, you know. I was in the shop, in the same shop and this happened about 18 months ago, and I've got arthritis in my thumb, which is nothing because, all, lots of women get arthritis in their thumb and I banged my thumb. And if you, if you bang it, it is very, very painful.*

Mmm.

And I went, Huhhh, like that and a woman ran from one side of the shop to the, to me, to look at me and she said, Huhhh, is it angina.

Huhhh.

I worked in a home and I've got some knowledge, I've got some, I know about it.

Mmm.

And I said no, I just banged my thumb. [Laughing heartily.]

[Laughing.]

She apologised every time she saw me, but that sort of thing happens a lot.

So people expect that you're going to have some sort of...

Yes, they expect you to be ill.

Yes. [Laughs.]

They don't know anything about wellness.

Mmm.

Now I filled in a form. Where did I fill in ... I went to the dentist last week and they said to me ... I've been going there a long time, and they said we need you to, you know, fill in this form again. It's a new form, and it was a big you know A4 size page.

Mmm.

And it had two columns with different illnesses.

Mmm.

Would you please tick. I ticked one.

Mmm.

Which was arthritis. [Laughing.] And the dentist said to me, oh, you're very healthy.

Mmm, yeah well and a lot of people and even those people with you know, various chronic conditions, feel well.

But there's only five percent of people anyway that go off, need to go into care.

Mmm.

You know, nursing home care. Not five percent, seven percent. So that leaves 93 percent of people perfectly all right.

Mmm.

In terms they might have some condition, but they're all right in terms of the way they, you know.

Mmm.

Living on their own or whatever they live with, and there can be such a farce.

Yes, and there's, there's quite a fear of older age and, and association always of, that death must be imminent if you're older [laughs].

Well I mean I go to the, I go to the gym three times a week.

Mmm.

I swim. I lift weights.

So which gym do you go to?

I actually go to the gym in the Grand Chancellor.

Mmm.

Because it has a beautiful, a wonderful swimming pool. It's only a ten-metre pool but it's in the most beautiful ... It's in a ... At the top of the building ... Well not at the top. It's on the tenth floor and it's a great big domed room with windows all the way round.

Mmm.

And so on a day like this ... I swam there yesterday. It's absolutely beautiful.

Mmm, I didn't even know it was there. I've never seen it.

No, and the other thing about it is that it's a quiet little gym and you have to wear proper clothes. You're not ... They don't want anyone in a bathing costume.

Mmm.

You know, and it's very quiet. There's one television set but it's usually off.

So people were what t-shirts and shorts and that sort of thing.

Light ones, yes, light ones, yes. Most of the women wear trousers.

Mmm.

And you have a program with a, with the, what do you call them... Trainer.

Mmm. So [inaudible].

Gives everybody a program.

And is it expensive?

Well it works out, if you go three times a week it works out about four dollars fifty a time. You have a ...

Mmm, so you have a monthly ...

No, you pay fortnightly in arrears.

Oh.

And it's ...

Oh, that's fantastic, fortnightly in arrears is fantastic.

And if you go away, you don't, you don't have to pay. Only if you go on holiday, and ... What was I going to say? You get free towels from the hotel, provides all the towels and apples. [Laughs.]

Huh, to encourage health.

But it's a very good atmosphere and everybody's very friendly and you get to know, you know, chat to people and that sort of thing.

Mmm, so you don't find there that you're treated as a lesser person because you're older.

No.

Mmm, so the trainers, they'd be young people though wouldn't they.

He's ... There's one trainer. He's ... he'd be thirties, thirty-five. I don't ... He's a very tall guy, difficult to tell ...

Mmm.

But he's got a young child so you know.

But he'd be yeah, a professional person.

He's professional yeah.

He wouldn't be ignorant about health issues.

No, no, he talks about food yes, he talks about food.

And in fact there's been some excellent research done only recently. I don't know if you saw it. It was on the TV about just the sort of thing you're doing in fact, but even with people like in their mid eighties, this intensive physical training, particularly weight training, that actually, you know has been found to have a huge benefit.

Well I, I did it because I've got, not osteoporosis but osteopenia or something like that which is the condition that means you might get osteoporosis.

Mmm.

Because I had it in my back and I had a lot of trouble with it for years and I had a hysterectomy when I was 42. I was very sick and nobody ever said to me you should do this or that in terms of exercise or food or supplements or anything, and then, and I had a damaged knee from when I was very young, so it all kind of accumulated.

Mmm.

And what happened was I had one of my sons saying to me go and join the extras on the health.

Mmm.

And when I did that and discovered you know that I could do things rather cheaply.

Mmm.

First of all I went to the physio, and the physio said my god you're all, you know, you're all out of kilter, your skeleton, from, from having pain and you know how you hold yourself.

Yes, you protect yourself.

All that sort of stuff, so that was the first thing I did, I went to physio, and mind you, the doctor had sent me to the hospital physio for a long period of time and because they have a medical approach to things, nothing happened.

Mmm.

I went to the sports physio.

[Laughs.]

And from there I went to the chiropractor.

Mmm.

I've been going to the chiropractor for about nearly three years, on a regular basis and he said, you know, you've got this condition. You can't change it but we can maintain it.

Mmm.

And then the doctor put me on calcium and two years ago I had a scan, which showed up that I have this back problem. I haven't got any trouble with my hips.

Mmm.

But with my back.

Just a certain amount of bone loss, but it's not ...

A great deal of bone loss actually.

Mmm.

And, then my ... I've had it two years this February, it was two years since I'd had the first scan and it had improved.

Mmm.

And the other thing I've got a problem with is my teeth, not my teeth my gums. I've lost half the bone in my, in my jaw, because I've got what they call ... What do they call it? Gingivitis.

Oh, you lose bone from that.

Yes I see ... I got to the, to the specialist. I can't even remember.

It's inflamed gums. Dental therapist or something like that?

No, no, specialist.

Oh.

It costs two hundred and twenty dollars every time I walk through the door.

What's that, an orthodontist?

Yeah, it's ... he's called a peridontist.

Periodontal disease it is, yeah.

Yeah. He's a peridontist. So I've been going to see him.

Has that helped?

I, I, I've only, I ... As long as I keep going.

Mmm.

And I'm only going every year. This, this year's the first time. I've been going twice a year.

Mmm.

And I go to the dentist twice a year.

I have it and I go twice a year.

And now this year he said no I don't need to see you until, last October, whatever it was. I'm going again in October.

Mmm.

October last year, because it improved.

Mmm, I'm going ...

And when I went he took, he took this great big x-ray that goes right round your whole mouth and you could see. It showed all the bone loss.

Mmm.

And I've had that for 46 years, because my eldest son's 46 and it came after he was born.

Oh, yeah so it's a sort of health related thing and if you have an extra burden on your health perhaps that's when it happens, yeah, so uh ...

So that's another thing, the, this extras in the Medical Benefits is a very good thing to have.

Mmm, yeah.

It took me a very long time to realise that. I wish that I'd 've realised it before.

Mmm. Yes, I'm on it myself now.

And of course, it costs, what does it cost, about \$24 a month. [Laughs.] I get hundreds of dollars out of it every year

Mmm.

I've just been to the dentist and the dentist, the dentist charged a \$113 dollars and I got \$60 back. I mean that's not bad is it.

Mmm.

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 33

Well that's a point. Two, three years. I think three, mmm.

And where did you live before you moved here.

Excuse me a moment won't you [as she finishes a chocolate].

That's all right, yes.

I had a [pause] unit in [name of suburb deleted] which I'd lived in for two, maybe three years; before that I'd lived up further North and I had a fall one night, about ten thirty and I couldn't get up.

Mmm.

So I rang my son and he came with his son and they got me up and he talked to me and I discovered that I still couldn't move this part of me [indicating hips].

Mmm.

So he sent for the ambulance and I went to hospital and they taught me how to, how to walk again and that sort of thing, you know.

Mmm.

And uh you know there was no real explanation for it except that I just lost the use of my hips.

Mmm.

And I still have a little bit of difficulty.

Mmm.

And if I do fall down, which I'm very careful not to do these days, I cannot get up.

Mmm.

I'm all right once I'm up but there we are. So that's the story of that.

Mmm, so that's what led you, to you moving here.

Yes.

Mmm.

Yes, they wouldn't let me out of hospital until I'd got a vacancy here.

Mmm.

I'd already been out here and looked at the place. I came out with a social worker who brought me out and introduced me to the people here, and my name was down for a vacancy.

Yeah.

And I had to stay in hospital until the vacancy ... Well I needn't have stayed in if it had been convenient for me to go and live with my son.

Mmm.

But that wasn't a convenient house for me to live in.

Mmm.

So they kept me in hospital until there was a vacancy here and then I came in here.

Mmm.

And I think it's about three years ago. I know it was July the ninth, but I'm not sure whether it was two hundred and two or two hundred ... two thousand and two thousand and three.

Mmm.

But that doesn't matter too much does it?

Mmm, no I suppose we could always ask [name deleted] and he would have a record of it.

Oh yes, there'd be records here.

Yeah.

Well [name deleted] would have a record here anyway.

Yes.

It's just that I've never bothered about it very much.

Yeah.

I know it was July the ninth. Don't ask me why. [Laughing.]

[Laughing.] Oh well, oh well, yeah it'd be nice to know the exact time just so that when you say it.

Yes.

You know that it's the correct one.

Yeah.

Yeah and so what caused you to choose here? You know for your ...

Ah well mainly I suppose because this social worker whose name was [name deleted], [name deleted] whatever it was, had sort of taken an interest in me you know.

Mmm, mmm.

And he'd sort of taken me around one or two places and he brought me and my son out here to introduce me to the place and sort of more or less say, that is the sort of place I think you'd like when you can no longer live on your own in a unit, you know.

Mmm.

And my son and I agreed with him.

Mmm.

We were very much taken by the place.

Mmm.

And the people here. There was a different, different housekeeper then but that's beside the point, but so my name was put on the list of you know, when there's a vacancy and when it's time, let's have, just have her in there.

Mmm.

[Laughs.] So. *Here am I.*

Had you heard about Abbeyfield before that?

No.

Mmm, mmm.

No. I mean I've learned quite a bit about it since because I've discovered they started in England anyway but then of course when I was in England I wasn't interested in old people's homes [laughing], that was the last thing I was thinking of.

So you're from England?

I am from England.

Mmm.

Yes. I have Australian citizenship. I decided that it was only fair to do something like that, since I'd lived here more years than I lived in England.

Mmm.

But, apart from that, I'm still English at heart.

Mmm, mmm.

I think you always are whatever you're born to really.

Mmm, but there's a strong link between England and Australia anyway.

Yes there is, yes.

Probably more so a long time ago than now.

Than now yes, that's true.

Because people used to look to England as home.

Yes, yes.

Yes because most had come from there at some point.

Yes, true.

So what was the particular thing? I mean what were the other places you looked at compared to here.

[Sighs.] I can't remember looking at anywhere else.

Mmm, did you look at like retirement units at ...? You said you had looked at some other places.

Well no. I suppose I must have done but retirement units were out of the question.

Mmm.

I didn't have enough money. I was one of these people who didn't believe in saving my money to try and buy a house or ...

Mmm.

Send it, or leave it for my son

Mmm.

Because I knew he didn't need it anyway. I spent all the money I had.

Mmm.

The money that I had when I retired which was oh I suppose you could call it superannuation but it wasn't really, even more or less. I worked for the government.

Mmm.

And I, I got; if I retired by the time I was 65 I got retirement pay. And if I weren't working after that I didn't. So I retired at 65.

Mmm.

Because, excuse me ... because I wanted money and I went on a three month trip around Australia.

Mmm.

Going to all the places ... Well I don't know about all the places that I wanted to go to, but I did a pretty good trip. I went up North to Kakadu and then down the middle down through, on the Ghan then to Adelaide, across to Perth, up to Broome. You know.

Mmm.

And it was a good trip.

I've never been there. I'd love to go.

Oh, it was a thoroughly good trip. I've got a mass of photos, which every now and then I get out and have a look at.

So you actually spent the m ... You got a lump sum on your retirement and you spent it on a trip. Ah and that ... Because the lump sum you got, I mean you wouldn't 've been paying into superannuation for all of your working life would you.

No.

Because it didn't come in for women until more recently.

No.

Or even...

No. I spent ... I can tell you this because I had, I made out of ... I went with a friend, a woman friend and, and we had an itinerary all the way.

Mmm.

Mmm, it cost just over \$10,000.

Oh. For three months?

Mmm.

That's a ... I think that's a great thing to do because, you know, it would have been really stretching it to put it into housing I suppose at the time you retired even.

I just wasn't interested in having a house. I thought oh, be blowed to it. I mean I'm one of these people, I've never particularly wanted to have a house of my own.

Yeah.

Excuse me. I'll get rid of this [eating the other chocolate].

That's all right.

I suppose because, well no I'd never particularly wanted a house of my own. My marriage wasn't a very happy marriage, even though I had a couple of children.

Mmm.

But it wasn't ... We weren't suited. I should never have married anyway, or he should never have married either so between us we mucked up our life as far as marriage was concerned.

Mmm.

But that happens to a lot of people of course.

Did you stay together?

No. No, we ... Not after a while. We did for a while, when the children were young.

Mmm.

And then we ... Now it's, we've never divorced actually. I'm still married to him but then I didn't want to marry again and he didn't want to marry again.

Mmm, mmm.

So why bother?

Mmm, so how long ago did you separate?

Oh Lord. Ten, fifteen years, twenty years even.

Oh so it's not all that long. So it's since you retired really.

No, no. It was longer. No it was longer ago than that. It was way before I retired, yes.

Yeah, and so you were renting in [name of suburb deleted]?

Mmm, yes.

And how did you find that?

Well I think I was quite happy there. I had one or two friends there. We went to the, local ... No, it wasn't a local RSL. What do they have? A local something where we went and played cards. I used to have ... I used to play cribbage with people.

Mmm.

The Golden Years Club, I used to go there.

Mmm, mmm.

You know, just generally potter around. And, I suppose you can say for some years I just led a very uneventful life, but after all the things I'd done in my life that was all right.

Mmm.

That didn't matter.

Mmm, mmm, so you have done a lot in your life?

Well I think I have, yes, yeah.

So did you travel?

I lived ... I lived and worked in Moscow.

Oh.

And, I worked and lived in Singapore. And you know I've sort of been around quite a bit there, and there you are. Married an Australian in Singapore and came here.

Mmm.

That wasn't exactly the success story of my life but I did have a, I did have a couple of children, one of whom I'm still very close to, so ...

Mmm.

You know, I don't look upon that as an absolute disaster.

[Laughs.]

It was just not a very, not a very well planned thing but there we are.

Mmm.

No, when I look back I'm quite happy with the life I've lived. It wouldn't appeal to a lot of people. There are a lot of people who think of nothing but security.

Mmm, yes, that's right, mmm.

It never really bothered me.

Mmm.

It's just the way, the way you are

Mmm, yeah.

I suppose, isn't it really.

And you feel now you don't have any issues anyway. You're secure.

No, no, that's right. I'm in here. I have my pension, which pays for my board and lodging here.

Mmm.

And gives me a balance and I also have a part pension from the UK.

Mmm.

Because there's a number of years I worked for the UK government.

Mmm.

Which gives me just that bit extra over and above what some of the people here have, you know, who are just managing on the old age pension.

Mmm, yeah.

And uh, I'm quite happy, quite happy.

So that one would have helped you also to manage to, in rental accommodation a bit better than someone just on the pension.

Yes. Oh yes, it would, yes.

And that one, the British pension, that doesn't affect your pension here?

No.

No. That's ... That's quite fortunate isn't it?

No.

Because you'd paid into that?

That's right.

But it's not so much that it'd ...

No it's not so much. It's what ... I think it works out at about just over \$50 a week which is just that sufficient to give me that little bit over and above.

Mmm, mmm

You know.

Yeah, to have some more comforts and do a bit more, mmm.

That's right, yes.

Mmm, mmm, mmm.

Now I'm quite happy with ... I really am quite happy with life. When I look back, I think to myself; I'm not being smug, but I think I've really had rather a good life.

Mmm.

I can't complain about it. I mean, I've had my ups and downs and bad moments, obviously...

Mmm.

And the fact that my marriage didn't really work out was not a very happy time, when you...

Mmm.

I suppose when I realised that it, it really had been a mistake but ...

Mmm.

But as I say one of my. I had two sons, one of whom I'm completely alienated from simply because he didn't want to know me once he'd grown up and you know ...

Mmm.

He's gone off on his own and what have you, but the other one I'm still very close to.

Oh, so which was the one who's gone off? Is that the first or the second?

Second.

Mmm, and what, he's gone to the mainland or further than that?

I think he's up in Queensland at the moment.

Mmm.

He keeps in touch with his wha ... father, every now and then.

Mmm.

Who doesn't keep in touch with me. I mean we just don't bother with each other but the son who stays and is still close to me, he keeps in touch with his father so he learns about his brother, through that.

Mmm.

You know, it's just one of those things, but I, I mean, I'm quite... The last time I saw my youngest son he was ... Oh yes, I'll ... Yeah Mum, yeah things are fine. I'll come back and see you again and that. They were more or less his last words to me, you know.

Mmm, so it's not as though there's been a deliberate rift. It's just he's gone off and he's doing his own thing?

But he doesn't want to come back.

Yeah, doesn't want to come back, yeah.

No, I know that for a fact, yes.

So he's had, he's enjoying life up there?

Yeah, yes.

Yeah.

He...

So you'd like him to come back?

He's a troubled ... He's a troubled man.

Oh.

He really is.

Oh, so he hasn't settled into a relationship or anything like that?

No, he's ... Yes, I don't know he's ... I worried about him for a while my ... Oh, let's get into names. Les is my eldest son and he said to me, don't worry about [name deleted], Mum. He'll go his own way.

Mmm.

There's nothing you can do. It's not your fault.

Yes. Yeah, that's true.

So ...

It's very wise of him. You know, as you get ... You know, because I know with my own children, that sort of thing yeah.

That sort of thing yeah. Yes, you can't do much about it can you. Well I mean, you can't. You can only blame yourself if you know you've been a bad parent.

Mmm. No-one's a perfect parent.

No.

But you just do the best.

As long as you've done your best.

Yeah.

Then you really should not try and blame. I mean I did for a while. I sort of thought, now where did , where did I fail.

Because you ...

And then I thought ...

Mmm.

No I didn't.

Mmm, you feel responsible.

It just didn't work; not with him.

Yeah, well everyone's so different I think.

Yeah, that's right.

Even in one family.

As I say, I mean [name deleted] and I who are ... Oh, we don't live in each other's pockets but he comes to see me.

Mmm.

Reasonably frequently; rings me up every now and then. We're "in touch".

Mmm.

And ...

Without it ...

And ...

Being an obligation.

That's right.

Yes, which is probably the better way to have it.

It is, yes.

Yeah. And so you've never been a home owner?

No.

No.

No.

You've always rented? And you've, but you've managed to ...

Well as a matter of fact, when we were first ... Mmm, let me think about this. When we were first married I suppose it was, you, you get lost on times you know, as you get older.

Mmm.

You really do.

Yeah.

But we lived in [name of town deleted] [pause] and we had a house there and we were buying it.

Mmm.

And then that was when our marriage really began to [gesticulating going down] like that so, we... I don't know how it worked. I suppose we just stopped with the payments. I think that my son, the one who was married to ... got them back or something. Anyway whatever it was, he, he gave me whatever we paid in and said right that's it and that was the last ...

Mmm.

Well, not the last I actually heard of him, but that was definitely the end of our marriage, you know.

Mmm.

But ... And after that I thought ... I never bothered. I was very friendly with a woman who was about 17 years [younger] than myself, [sniffs] and it was just friendship. There was no funny business, you know.

Because people think, yeah, they think that.

And we, we got on very well, very well together although she was a lot younger than me. And, so I don't know we were sort of, quite happy, we ...

You shared?

After a while we shared a unit.

Mmm.

And, you know, there we were, [pause] but we didn't own it. We just paid, paid rent for it you know but ...

So you were there for a fair while?

Yes, a fair while, you know, I ... As I say as you get older ... I mean, let's face it, look I'm 82.

Oh right.

And ...

I didn't realise you would have been that old. [Laughs.]

Yes. And you, your years get a bit blurred.

Yes I can understand that.

You know, yes.

Yes, because it doesn't matter because, yes, there's more to it than that.

Yes, that's right, yes.

Yeah, so how old ... Your sons were already grown up when you split up then? They were old enough ...

Yes.

To go their own way.

I suppose they were.

And you didn't need to support.

Well, to begin with, no. [Pause.] When we first more or less went a bit apart ... No my younger son was then [pause] nine or ten.

Mmm.

He stayed with me and the other son, who was Year 12 [presumably she meant 6th class] ... There was only about 19, or about 19 months between the two of them, went with his father and they were ... Lord, where were they? We were in Queensland.

So this was after you sold the house?

Yes this was after we, we had definitely parted.'

Mmm.

And, I was living in rented accommodation with my younger son, and my other son had gone with my husband to, yeah, oh well to [name of town deleted] I think it was. And at that stage we were... I was quite friendly still with part of his, my husband's family.

Mmm.

You know, we got on very well. But anyway, we split on those grounds and, oh dear, it's dreadful trying to remember back what happened, you know, and ... But there we were, and then after some time my older son came back down to [pause] [name of town deleted] I suppose. Yes it was [name of town deleted], because he was going to school down there, and it wasn't ... It was better. He'd won a scholarship, that's right. And he had to come down there and he went to live with his aunt, my sister-in-law, for some time and then he came to see me. I can't remember how all this happened ... You know how things ... You don't remember everything ...

Mmm.

But after a while he came to live with me instead of staying with her.

Mmm.

And we became ... I suppose you could say we became reconciled.

Mmm.

And friendly and, got on very well together and that was the end of that.

Mmm.

We've been friends ever since.

Mmm. And so, you actually made a choice to come to Tasmania? Did you come with your sons, or ...

How did I get here? Ah, yes. No, I came. Uh, I made a choice. This was when we were in Queensland.

Mmm.

And, when I was [pause] 70, yes. When I was 70, friends and family gave me a big party and bought that [indicating] that, dolphin for me which in those days was close on \$100. It'd probably be even more now but you know, it was very expensive. They bought that for me and gave me this party and it was just before my son came back down to Tasmania. He had been offered a job as manager of [name deleted] at [name deleted]; and he was coming back down. He'd come down without his, his family, to begin with, to get settled and you know, get a place to live and, he and his, his wife and two children were going down to join him so that was that. And then I was still very friendly with this, with this woman and we shared a unit and we did a lot of things; and we went and did the trip together.

Mmm.

But, she developed bowel cancer.

Mmm.

I'm telling you the whole end, the whole bit of my life, but still. She developed bowel cancer and I read all sorts of things about what you need to do with people who have bowel cancer and how you encourage them and help them and all the rest of it.

Mmm.

You know, which I did. And oh, I suppose it was about a couple of years when she went back and then her specialist decided ... He'd examined her and her, her intestine was in a dreadful state.

Mmm.

And he decided he was going to operate and cut most of it out.

Mmm.

She didn't need it you know.

Mmm.

And it wasn't doing her any good; which he did and he nearly lost her because she nearly died. She had a ... And she had what they described as a near death experience.

Mmm.

And it changed her nature completely.

Mmm.

With a lot of people they say that it makes them more understanding, more caring.

Mmm.

It didn't with her. It was the exact opposite.

Mmm.

And when she recovered her attitude was, I'm going to do exactly what I want to do.

Mmm.

Not what anyone else wants me to do.

Was this before or after the trip?

Oh after, yeah. We were never in good enough terms after that because she, she said ... It, it really did, it changed her completely. She no longer recognised the fact that I had stuck by her.

Mmm.

So closely for a couple of years, you know, and I really had. It was, I am going to do what I want to do.

Mmm, and say.

And not what other people want, you know.

Did she also say what she wanted to say? Like not consider people's feelings in what she said, or ...

Oh no, it didn't worry her at all. She was quite ... it got to the state when I just couldn't take it any longer and that was when ... By this time my son had settled down here because he'd got the job with [name deleted] and he had his family down, down here and, and I just decided I'd had it.

Mmm.

So I just said to him, I'm coming down. And I did.

Oh.

I just came down and you know, sort of left her and everyone that I'd known up there.

So it was a life changing thing for you, too, yeah.

It was but I just couldn't take it anymore because you know I mean it was He couldn't understand it for a while.

Your son?

Yeah.

Mmm.

He said, oh Mum, it'll pass. But it didn't.

Mmm.

She was quite ... I suppose you could say it changed her in so far as she was quite nasty.

Yuh, yeah, and so you had been sharing with her but you felt you could no longer share with her?

That's right.

And so you just said, I'm leaving.

I'm leaving. I'm out.

Mmm.

Yes.

Mmm.

And I went. And I don't know what happened to her. I have no idea. I know she was terribly fond of her father and I did hear that her father had got cancer and that she was upset. There was nothing I could do about that, you know.

Mmm.

Like that.

So it's probably come from a whole lot of other issues in her life.

Yes, so that was the end of that and I came down here and lived...

Twelve years ago [inaudible]?

I suppose it must have been.

Mmm.

You forget time really but, I know it was I lived in ... I lived in [name of suburb deleted] to begin with.

So you rented, yeah.

And I just rented a house and, I managed in so far as I'd got the balance of the money I'd got when I left my job. You know, we didn't ... I didn't spend all of it. I'd got about four or five thousand dollars in the bank which is sufficient to, you know, give me a cushion, and I was getting the old age pension of course from Australia, and a part pension from the UK, so I thought I was quite happy and I was quite, quite enjoying life, you know. You don't need too much when you get older.

Mmm.

Not really.

Mmm.

Mmm, so, story of my life. [Laughs heartily.]

So, what do you like about living here?

[Pause] *the atmosphere I think here, is very pleasant. Very peaceful. We have a housekeeper who is an absolute gem.*

Mmm.

We didn't, not when I first came here. Oh Lord, looking back, yes we had one that we all liked until we discovered that underneath that there was that, if you know what I mean.

Mmm.

Anyway, that's beside it now. That's, that's gone and done with.

Mmm.

And, [name deleted], who is now our present housekeeper, is an absolute gem.

Mmm.

She really is. She's, she's a very good cook. She's a very good manager. She looks after us very well. And, well, you know, it's just good being here. And, I'm not one of these people who's prepared to live in other people's pockets all the time. I've always been a little bit aloof, you know:

Yeah.

A little bit sort of withdrawn

Yes.

And into myself. I mean, I'm on reasonably friendly terms with everyone.

Mmm.

But not terribly friendly with everyone.

Mmm.

You know.

So it's similar to how people, anyone in a house would be to their neighbours or in a unit or...

Well yes.

A flat or ...

Well you see some people ... Now there are a couple of people here who sort of spend the evening in each other's rooms, you know, and watch television together and all the rest of it.

Mmm.

I don't want to do that.

Mmm.

I like my privacy. I'm friendly with one of the people here. Well more than friendly with. I mean I'm friendly with all of them in a way, but she'll come during the evening at some time and sort of say, you know, say something to me. She'll stay for about five or ten minutes and we'll have a bit of a natter.

Mmm.

And then just say, right I'm off, I'm off to bed or something like that.

Mmm.

And off she goes, you know, and, but that's the, that's the limit.

Yes, and I know, I mean it's about people knowing when to go and about, yeah.

Yeah.

Not living too close because you don't then have so many conflicts.

No. That's right.

Mmm.

That's right. No, I must admit, I'm ... There's one particular person here who annoys me intensely but I do try and curb my resentment.

Mmm.

Mind you, she doesn't please many of the people here either. [Laughing.] She's an absolute idiot, but still, never mind.

Yeah, but as long as you've got your own space and, yes.

That's the main thing.

Mmm.

And they all know that they do not walk in here uninvited.

Mmm, so some other people might have that people just can walk in?

Yes, there are one or two that you know, they're quite happy. They don't mind or whatever. I mean I think most of them prefer it if someone knocks on the door and says.

Mmm.

Can I come in

It's courtesy.

You know, that sort of thing, but, I don't think anyone would come in here unless they knew that I've invited them to come in.

Mmm, and so that's good. So you know that this is your space.

This is mine. This is my home, yes.

And so, how do you find, with the meals?

With, sorry?

Because you eat meals together, is that right?

Yes, yes. We get our own breakfast of course. It's up to us if we have just cereal, toast.

Mmm.

Boil an egg or what have you.

Mmm.

But [name deleted] cooks us a midday meal, which is the main meal of the day. And then she provides tea for us, which again we often have, scrambled eggs or toast, or you know something like that.

Mmm.

Some little thing that's, no actually we eat, [laughs] extremely well.

Mmm.

Extremely well.

So you have one really good balanced meal for lunch.

Yes in the middle of the day.

The big meal of the day.

Yes. And then, I mean in the morning for example, cereals are provided. They're in the pantry. If you don't like the ones they provide you, you buy your own.

Mmm.

Which is what I do.

Mmm.

Because [sniff], I mean I, I like Rice Bubbles occasionally and I like Weet Bix occasionally.

Mmm.

But [coughs] they're what I call the basic cereals.

Mmm.

And every now and then I like to get something a bit different, like Uncle Toby's so-and-so or something like that.

Mmm.

You know, so I do.

You mean like muesli or uh, porridge?

No, I don't like porridge. I do, do the Uncle Toby's ... It's not porridge bu, but you do it in the microwave. What do they call them?

Those little sachets?

Yes, that's right.

I'm ... That's what I'm on at the moment.

They're nice, they're nice

I'm having them every day.

Yes, yes.

Yes, mmm.

And I also, and I have liked for a long time, is soy milk instead of the ordinary milk.

I have soy.

So Good, yes. To me that makes the meal. That rounds it off.

Mmm.

[Laughs.] We have the same sort of tastes don't we.

[Laughs.] Yeah.

Yes.

Yeah.

But you see, I suppose in a way I'm a bit fortunate because I can afford to just buy those few extras because of the UK pension that I get as well as my own.

Whereas if it was really tight someone would feel that they would just.

Yes.

Have less choice.

That's right.

And use what was here.

Well they would. I mean [name deleted] for example. She's the one that I'm most friendly with. She's, she's what 85 I think. It is 84 or 85. She's a nice ... She's a very nice person and she and I have a bit of fun together you know. We sort of, backwards and forwards.

Mmm.

You know sort of the thing.

Joking, teasing.

But to the consternation of one the ladies here who thinks we're being serious when we're having a row.

Mmm.

Looks at us, you know; got no sense of humour at all.

Mmm.

You know the sort of thing. But anyway ... Oh what was I saying? I was in the middle of something wasn't I. But anyway we ...

You were talking about [name deleted].

Yes.

That, and about having the extra money.

That's right yes.

Yeah.

See I can, I can afford to. [Name deleted] can't. She's purely on the pension.

Mmm.

But, and I think too she pays in for a, a funeral scheme or something like that.

Oh, right.

Which you've got to. I don't bother. I think if my son can't afford to bury me, too bad. [Laughs.]

Oh, so Bessie doesn't have family?

No, no.

Mmm.

No, no family at all left with her.

Mmm.

She I think was the youngest of, of the family and she's now 85, so as you can imagine, the others have gone.

So she didn't have children.

No.

Mmm.

No she didn't. I've never gone into anything like that with her because ...

Mmm.

Unless she wanted to tell me, I mean that but ...

Mmm.

She was married. Yes, she was married but ...

So there may have been a reason.

She never had children, yes.

She may just not have been able to but some people, not everyone does.

No, true. So there we are.

Mmm. So do you feel safe here?

It's a very pleasant place to be.

Mmm.

It is. There I ... There's security, obviously, and yes it is. There's a nice atmosphere here, even though one or two of the people you feel you'd like to hit on the head sometimes [laughing], but I mean.

Mmm.

Let's face it, you can't live happily with nine other people all the time can you?

No.

Well nine other residents and then you've got, [name deleted] who's the housekeeper-cook.

Mmm.

You know. She's very good. Her husband's very good too. They live in the flat; in a unit, up there somewhere. And, he's a nice person and, we got to know him when he was doing something with our, our oven which wasn't working very well.

Mmm.

He saved the committee quite a lot of money.

Mmm.

Because he fixed it. But, he's a nice, nice sort of person.

Mmm.

You know. So and we get on very well and I'm, I mean everyone ... I'm quite reasonably friendly with, with everyone.

Mmm.

I'm not that aloof.

In a courteous way.

Yes.

Yeah.

But they all know that I have no intention of making this an open room for anyone to come into that wanted to. This is my room. This is my space.

Mmm, if you want company ...

People come here if I ask them.

Oh, mmm. And so do you spend much time in the common areas?

No.

Mmm.

I don't think any of us do, actually.

Mmm.

I mean there, there is a lounge and there's a television in it.

Mmm, but people have their own TVs.

Yes, that's right.

Mmm.

I mean I've got my radio/CD player there. And, television and a VCR, so I'm well organised with entertainment.

Mmm.

As you can see.

Yeah. And has anyone? I mean, there's guest accommodation here, so I mean you could have someone come to stay. I mean it's not as though you couldn't have someone...

Oh no, no.

Someone to stay.

You could do. There is a guest list somewhere. I mean there's a guest, there's a guest room ...

So if your son wanted to visit, he'd probably stay with his brother, but he could stay here.

Yeah, but he could stay here.

Yeah.

Yes. No there is, there is, there is a guest room with it's own shower and what have you; you know, little, little.

Mmm.

Thing-a-me-bob, and somewhere there's a little list, probably in the main room, which says you know guest payments that guests have to make so that they can, the ...

To cover the costs.

Yes but ...

Mmm, and you find this is enough room for you, and you've got enough storage space?

Oh look, it's plenty. I mean there we are, we've got our en, en suite there, you know, shower. All right, I don't have a bath anyway because I couldn't get into a bath these days.

But you have the option. If you want one there's a bath there.

There is a bath, not there, but there is a bath up in ...

In the guest room.

In the guest room, yes. But, which some people do use I think but I don't. I find the shower's quite sufficient.

Mmm.

And, as I say, I mean I've got everything. It's all my own furniture.

Mmm.

And that makes an awful lot of difference because you don't feel as though you're staying, you feel as though you're living.

Mmm. As though you're at home.

If you've got your own furniture.

Mmm, yes.

With your things around.

So is there anything you don't like about living here?

No.

Mmm.

Except one or two of the people but [laughing] you can't get along with nine people, unfortunately.

Yeah.

I mean one or two of them I sort of think, oh my godfather, you are an idiot, you know.

Mmm.

But you have to ... Well you just gloss over that.

Mmm.

I mean, as I say, there's no way in the world you can get terribly friendly, or get along with nine other people.

Mmm.

All the time. You've got to give and take and those you don't like so well, you make sure you don't see very much of.

Mmm.

That's the only thing.

And so you find that? You find that if someone's really annoying you, you don't have to spend time in their company?

Oh no.

Yeah.

You don't have to at all.

Mmm.

It's up to you whether you make your place a sort of open area or whether you don't. I don't.

Mmm.

People know that, I don't welcome anyone coming to the door and saying ... All right they'll knock and say can I come in.

Mmm.

That's all right, as long as they only want to say something to me and stay for about five minutes or so.

Mmm.

But they know perfectly well that they will not be welcome to stay the whole evening with me.

Mmm.

And I mean I would be quite open about it. I would turn them out.

Mmm, and so this is no different from, I mean just from other people I've talked to who live in houses.

Mmm.

Talk about their neighbours in that way.

No, that's right.

That most ... A good neighbour is someone who ...

Yeah.

Doesn't impose and knows when to go.

That's right.

And is civil.

Yeah.

Without, yeah ...

Yeah. It is and I think that is the secret of this place really, and I think in a lot of ways that is due to [name deleted] who is the house-keeper cook.

Mmm.

Because she manages things very well.

Yeah.

And without interfering, she still keeps things on an even balance.

Yes, yes.

That's how I look at it anyway.

So she must understand the principles it takes for communal type living to work.

She does. She does yeah. She worked for, I don't know very well, [name deleted].

Oh, right.

She worked for there.

Oh.

For a long time before she came here.

So she'd have a lot of experience of people living together.

Yes.

And of, yeah, people who probably aren't very skilled at living together too.

That's right. Yes.

Mmm.

No, she, she's, she's very good, yes. So, no, it's a very happy house. It really is.

Mmm.

Obviously there are people that you don't like particularly well, that are ... There's one man whose ... We've got one, two ... We've only got two men here at the moment. Ah, one of them is, oh potters around and does a bit of gardening and what have you. And the other one, I ... [Sniffs.] He's younger than the rest of us. He's only in his fifties [lowers voice] and I don't like him one little bit.

Mmm.

But you don't have to like everyone that,

Mmm.

You know, lives around. I don't think he's very popular with anyone much.

Mmm.

But still, you know, where always quite sort of polite to him.

Mmm.

He has the most atrocious table manners that you have ever seen.

Oh.

His, his sister once said, she actually said it to me. We haven't seen her very often, that she would never, ever sit down and have a meal with her brother.

Mmm.

Because it made her sick to see the way he ate his food.

Dear, dear.

And I felt that was pretty ...

His own sister.

She said it very ...

Yeah.

She didn't spread it all round the place.

Yeah.

She just said it to me but I said yes I could see it. I felt very sorry for the people who sit at the same table that she, that he does, you know.

So you don't ever sit with him?

No, no.

No.

We've got two tables in there and we put five people at each, you know, and I'm at this one over here [laughing] and he's at that one over there.

Heh.

Which is just as well because I'm afraid ... Well not afraid, but if I had to sit and watch him I would tell him exactly what I thought of him and I think actually that would be a good thing.

Mmm. It depends on what the problem is, because if it's a mental illness then he might not be...

I don't think it is, no, not according to, not according to his sister or his mother for that matter. His mother's a very nice ...

[Phone rings.]

That's your phone. I'll turn off the tape.

[Turns tape off.]

[Turns tape on.]

Yeah, and do you find people treat you differently now that you're older?

Well we're all older.

Yeah, so no-one here treats.

So we're all on equal terms, except the one man.

Mmm.

Whose younger.

Mmm.

[Laughs.] *But then I suppose we treat him a bit differently because he gets on our nerves.*

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *He's the sort of person, if you're standing talking to him, he carries on and on and on.*

Oh.

And you just sort of go like that and eventually you get back to your room and say, well thank you [name deleted]. Right, you know. You know how to deal with it but ...

Oh, so he doesn't have any sort of balance in interacting with people.

No, no.

Mmm. It's a skill.

No we all do really get on quite well together.

Mmm.

I mean, we're not ... I suppose probably.. I can't talk for the others, but I'm not aloof but I am aloof, if you know what I mean.

Well, you're clear about boundaries.

Yes.

Which is a different thing from being aloof. It's not being unfriendly.

No, no.

No.

That's right.

Mmm. And you find people here help each other?

Yes, I think so. Yes they do. I, I mean, [name deleted] for example is one of the people. I shouldn't mention names, but she's one of the people who lives entirely on her pension. She has no other money at all.

Mmm.

And everyone is prepared to help her out or lend her ten, ten dollars or twenty dollars or something.

Mmm.

For a while, if she's in a bit of a state you know I mean, she doesn't go round asking for it, but I've lent her money.

Mmm.

A couple of times and she's very, very good at paying it back.

Mmm.

But you know she does get to the point that she ... Well, you know, she has a telephone, which is essential really.

Mmm.

For someone who's in their eighties. You need a phone.

Mmm.

So she's got that to pay. And then all right, she has her hair done every now and then you know, that sort of thing and sometimes I think she does get a little bit, you know, a little bit hard up.

Mmm.

Which is fair enough.

Yeah.

So.

Because it can be very tight.

I've lent her money but she's always paid it ... I've never had to ask for it back. I've always got it back, you know.

Which is just the sort of person that you will lend money to again, isn't it.

Of course it is, yes.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Mmm.

I mean I know I can afford to so why worry about it. As a matter of fact [laughing], don't spread this around because [name of housekeeper deleted] doesn't want it known, but I borrowed [laughing] \$90 from [name of housekeeper deleted] the other day.

Heh , heh. Was that for a big bill?

Well I had a ... It was a nursing thing and you were supposed to pay by vouchers, you know.

Mmm, so you have someone come?

I could never be bothered to get the vouchers.

Oh.

And I ended up and I'd got a ... The latest bill 'd got said that I owed them \$90 and I said, oh my godfather, what am I going to do. Anyway I rang up the people and they said ... I said look, I said I find it very hard to get hold of the vouchers and they said, oh you can pay cash. Just give it to the nursing aide who comes and does the necessary for you.

Mmm.

You know. Actually, it's housework. Just give it to her. So I said, well I said, I wish I'd known that some time ago because I said I've been bothered about this voucher business, which is you know what they insisted upon. They said, oh no, you can give her cash, you know, she's quite ...

[Phone rings.]

Here we go again.

[Interview ended because it was at of the tape and not worth turning back on.]

Interviewee 34

[Tape turned on.]

Do you mean in this particular house?

Yes.

Since, well I bought it in 2001. I was living here in 2004 but then I had a fire so I've just got back into this house again.

And where did you live before you moved here?

Well before I lived here I spent ten years at Cascade Cohousing which is a community of about 15 houses, including attached houses called auxiliary flats and where there were very few children when we started but it's ideal for children so now it's a community with a good number of children.

Oh, so it's changed.

It's changed, yes.

Mmm.

And ...

And what ...

[Both laugh.]

They were a good, a good breeding age, you know.

Oh, oh, yeah.

The people who were there mostly. I was the oldest one there.

Mmm, and what led to you moving here?

Because I had a change of circumstances. I had a room at university and so I had my books. It was like a spare room for me and I built one of the smallest places in cohousing. It was 50 square metres with a mezzanine and a little ladder.

Mmm.

And I used to pop up and down that ladder. I had a fall there.

Mmm.

And, but dropped into the waste paper basket very neatly, so that was no problem. But you know, it wasn't ideal for my new life.

Mmm.

I'm a writer and I needed office space.

Mmm.

So I've got all of that on one level here.

And so can you tell me what you like about living here?

I, I like a lot of solitude, and not ... But also I get people calling in. I'm still in touch with the community at Cascade Cohousing but it means that I can work more on my own work or I can, I can make it so that I have times when people know I'm working but still times to see people if they call in.

Mmm.

I'm more in control of what I want to do.

Mmm.

And it's different from what I wanted to do then. I was out at uni every day.

Mmm, and so you're saying, you still have an involvement with that community.

I do, yes.

Oh.

Well they were friends. I'm very, I feel very attached to them and to the idea of cohousing. That's why I'm working on cohousing now. I think it's ideal but I think we need a model for older women and it won't be the cohousing that you read about in the Durant book about cohousing. It would... But a model for older women would mean a different focus. Whereas the focus on the other cohousings in South Hobart has been for family and for children.

Mmm.

And those of us working on a new cohousing are wanting a focus for older people so you will have a quiet room and not as much work to do because we're not able to do as much work, so there'd be caretaking of the gardens ...

Mmm.

And a different focus and also it would be good to make it of course, accessible for people with disabilities.

Mmm, yeah I can ... Because the original cohousing ... I'm just getting off the track here, was actually designed for families wasn't it.

Yes it was. If you read any of the literature it is for families.

Mmm.

And, and you know, that works incredibly well. I'm, I've seen children growing up and then I feel they're my friends now you know and I saw them in mother's tummies and now they're these lovely young people growing up.

Mmm.

And that's been terrific, to see the extra confidence and skills, community skills and relationship skills that they have and their ability to cook, you know, if we have common meals. So I've seen great development amongst young people in that model. It's a model I think we should be having many more of here, as they do in Denmark.

Mmm.

And in America now of course.

Yeah, so you've done some research on the seniors' cohousing in Denmark then?

No, I don't know much about the seniors' cohousing in Denmark. I didn't know that they had made that focus there but because they have so many I would think it would have to be there.

Yeah.

Because they have numerous models don't they Jan.

Yes, yes. There's many different models.

Yeah.

And so what is it you don't like about living here?

There's nothing I don't like about living here.

Oh.

Oh yes, there is one thing. I've got a very steep driveway, but I like it because I nip up and down. You know, it's like everything, use your brain and it doesn't get rusty and I can nip up and down that easily but I have to think in advance but all I have to do is a do a, put a little pathway along from my balcony to the road.

Oh, so you've thought about that.

Oh yes. I, I mean I'm here because I'm thinking, how will I manage my old age, you know. You know, what, what do I need to be independent and, and not to need people caring for me. I want to be independent and look after myself as long as possible.

Mmm, and can you tell me about your neighbours here. Do you know your neighbours?

I always make a point of knowing my neighbours.

Mmm.

That's part of it. There's a neighbour on one side who at the moment's got flu, so I was going to the shops just now and I checked in to see if she needed anything; took her some oranges. She would do the same for me. And on this side ... I see ... The other side I see wonderful chickens [laughs] and I know they're great free rangers and they're still laying in the winter when most people's chickens have stopped. They're very happy chickens.

Mmm.

So I get eggs from her, and so, yes that works well. I mean one of the problems in [name of suburb deleted] which I get here but not as much as where I was at cohousing is smoke. And you know I have to close my windows, because in [name of suburb deleted] we're getting pollution in the air.

Mmm.

And we should ... I try to do something about it. I've written to Council. Whereas it's worse over at [name deleted] Cohousing because the community hou ... The ... I don't know what they call them now. I call them Council houses.

Mmm.

But what do you call them?

Public housing.

Public housing has got heaters that are more than ten years old and they should be out now. And also I used to try and look after the little girl opposite there. Her father was bit violent. Things like that so you know, there's a lot more disturbances there.

Mmm.

Yeah.

So you like living here better for that reason.

It's more tranquil. It's more tranquil.

Mmm.

It's different. I mean I liked that for ten years. This is another stage. That's all it is really.

Mmm.

Preparing for a different stage.

Mmm, and so what sort of families, or households are around here?

Well, this is great fun really. Next door, Christine, this doesn't sound like fun but she lost her husband two years ago and now she, she misses taking care of somebody so she's living alone.

Mmm.

But she's ... And she doesn't mind me saying this. She's working with SPOT, Single People of Tasmania and they put out a booklet.

Mmm.

And there are all these lonely men, so she's had a very entertaining winter.

Heh, heh.

Going out with all these lonely men.

Oh. [Laughs.]

This is ... I listen to these stories, and it's terrific.

Yeah.

You know, so that's her situation.

Mmm.

And it's quite different on the other side where my neighbour has, I think it's five children.

Mmm. Is that a couple with five children?

A couple with five children, yes. And she hasn't worked. I think she's ... The children of course have been pretty regular.

Mmm.

And she's young. Looks fantastic, fit. [Laughs.]

That's unusual these days isn't it, to ...

Yeah, yeah.

So what about across the road?

A very lovely couple with two children, who yell across the road, "Hullo [name deleted]".

Mmm, mmm.

So that's, that's something I check out when I live somewhere anyway.

Mmm.

Having lived in cohousing I guess you do become accustomed to living with people and you know if I'm unhappy about anything, Christine and I have, we talk about things very straight and she's not a person who holds any resentment. She comes and has a cup of tea afterwards, you know. It's all right.

Mmm, yeah.

And we haven't ... We've only had one thing that's been a little bit difficult about, because she uses my property every day to go, you know, to walk where she wants to walk, which is fine, but she's also got a shed on my property which I'd like moved.

Mmm, so you don't have a boundary fence.

No I don't, I don't want a fence.

Mmm.

And, people have said you should fence but we'll sort it out.

So she actually walks along the rivulet, does she?

Ah no, she brings her dogs. It's the way she takes her dogs. So she's got her way blocked off from her house, and her ... So she likes to use mine but it doesn't matter. I've got lots of room

Mmm.

But ... And we'll get the shed moved eventually. I just have to be patient. But you know I said to her I want it moved, the other day. [Laughs.]

So this is the issue; the shed is the issue?

It's a little issue. It's not an issue. It's something that has to be done.

Mmm.

That's an issue isn't it. [Laughs.] Yeah.

And, so is there anything about here that you'd like to change, to make it a better place to live?

Well because the house burnt down, I made ... I insulated the walls with wool batts. So they're not toxic like the batts that were before. When ... I, I had difficulties when I first moved in. I'd had tenants and the place flooded and they'd just put mats back without telling me and then when I moved in after changing the carpeting and the, you know, doing things up. I had a flood because I did exactly what had happened to them. Because they hadn't told me I didn't know.

Mmm.

So, but then, the carpets ... I put down. I tried to put down non-toxic underlays because I do a lot of research on sick buildings and I was very allergic when I, to different thing, you know; it triggered with the pollens and then it was off. And, but so I try to avoid toxic things but then I found you can't find underlays that aren't toxic.

Mmm.

So I've gone for what isn't as warm, but I'm healthy, so I've got slate.

Mmm.

I've got tiles, and rugs that I can put out to air.

Mmm.

So in the summer it's lovely and in the winter it's a bit colder.

Mmm, so is that the same downstairs?

Downstairs I've got wood and, and I've bought linoleum which is really expensive but it's marmoleum. It's made with linseed oil and flax I think.

Mmm.

So again it's not a plastic product.

Mmm.

So I avoided plastic as much as I could.

Mmm.

And then I've done the curtains and blinds in the flat down there for the tenant, down there, the same, the same.

Non-toxic.

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, so you've been able to introduce a lot of the non-toxic materials.

Well I have. And the paints are bio-paints which again is really important if you move straight into a place and, it's just been painted; whereas, I mixed, I mixed this paint which is easy. You know, ochre and the white, so I graduated the yellow, the warm yellow throughout, so I could deepen colours or soften them or have just white.

Mmm.

Which is fun to do.

Mmm.

The painters were very rude. They were all very rude, the builders but eventually they were interested because they got sick. You know, they get sick and when we talked about it, they could understand why some of them were getting sick.

Mmm, so they, you mixed the paint but you had painters come and put it on for you.

Oh well, well I had builders working here. They didn't really want to do the painting so they said you can do this, you can do that, you can do. So I did what I could.

Mmm.

But I, I was pretty tired at that stage and we, we found a painter just on the road but he, he lost his licence and he got into trouble and I ended up just doing it myself.

Mmm.

With help from friends. I had such a lot of help from friends.

Mmm.

And, and also when my house burnt down, people said to me where are you going to sleep tonight. And I said, I don't have to worry. So you know where I slept. I slept at cohousing.

Oh, oh.

And when I went up there a bed was made up for me; clothes to fit me, because I had no clothes to change into.

Mmm.

Were on a chair and Amelia, one of the young girls there who I'd seen grown up, growing up, had left a poem under my pillow.

Mmm, that's lovely.

And there was a meal, a common house meal that night.

Mmm, so you stayed ...

And we both went. The girl downstairs and myself went to dinner and I stayed there.

Mmm, so you stayed in the guest accommodation there?

No I stayed in, Jane's house. Jane and I built together.

Oh, mmm.

And she was away so people knew that Jane wouldn't mind if I tucked into her big bed.

Mmm, and she'd left a key with someone.

Yes, yes.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Because that's a terrible thing to have happened to have your house burn down.

Well and you know, you know there's a new cohousing book out by Graham Meltzer.

Mmm-mmm.

And in that book, I was very interested in one of the stories that was told. I'm not sure which group of cohousing it was, but a couple who were not young I don't think; the m ... woman had cancer and when she died, the community, you know he, they were in the community and the community just came around all of them and took care of things and looked after him and he's been able to continue and involved social life, but without his wife.

Mmm.

And you know that was so important to him, instead of being a lonely person.

Mmm.

Trying to do things on his own that he didn't do before,

Yes.

Like cooking and ...

Yes, like when you talk about the woman next door, with the group that she's got, where there are a whole lot of people ...

Yes.

Who if they become widowed or divorced.

Yes.

Or whatever, become very lonely.

Yes but I'm, I'm full of admiration for her because she just gets out there. I mean not many people would do what she's doing. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

She's been through a few, I can tell you. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Yes, yeah, because I often think that. I mean, I think cohousing's a good design but there are other ways to create community.

Lots of ways, lots of ways, yes.

Like talking to your neighbours.

Yes.

Yeah, it's it's yeah it's about principles ...

Yeah.

Of living as well, isn't it.

It is. That's right

As well as housing design.

But what's lovely about cohousing is you can be much more spontaneous. You see someone going by, like for instance [name deleted] who lives up there and who I see, she's, she's working as a midwife and so her hours are irregular and I don't know what her hours are but if she'd walk past I'd know that she would, and I'd say come on, let's go for a walk or let's go and see a movie. And that's what's so good about cohousing, you can see how people are.

Mmm.

Because they're moving past your doorway, so.

And there's opportunities to do things spontaneously.

Absolutely spontaneously, which is terrific. I have great trouble in remembering where I'm supposed to be when. It's different when you're at work because you have habits, you know.

Mmm.

But when you're doing lots of different things.

Yeah.

Without a big structure.

That's right.

You can forget. [Laughs.]

And I certainly find, you know sometimes, some nights I think I feel like going out and you ring a few people and they've all got something else on [laughs].

Mmm, mmm.

Because you haven't been able to see where they're at because.

Yes.

You don't see them.

Or someone's making muffins. You know they called the other day and said come over and have muffins. Lovely, but I couldn't because I hadn't time. Well, I was going out. But you know, normally you can kind of smell them. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

You can tune in to what's going on.

Yeah. And so are you planning to make any changes you know, like thoughts of moving somewhere else?

No, I'm working on a cohousing, and eco-village, with two other groups and I'm very happy here so I'm not thinking of moving myself but I said that when I was working on the other cohousing. I said I'm happy where I am but you know I get very excited working on projects and you get very involved when you're building something, so who knows.

Mmm.

But, but at the moment I can't see any reason and you know Jan I look out of this window and I look at the mountain and a Clydesdale horse and there are ducks here every morning and that's from every window of this house.

Mmm.

And the sun pouring in. And they say it's better for your health if you can see things like that when you're working; if you look up.

Mmm.

And you've got a lovely panorama in front of you. And, and in [name of suburb deleted], bus stop right outside the door, ten minutes to town.

Mmm.

I walk to town.

Mmm.

Not so often as I should.

Mmm, yeah, so you're approaching it from the point of view that that there are no "shoulds" and, I mean, sort of some people might think, oh, I'm on my own, I'm getting older, I have to plan for the future because perhaps I won't be able to manage here...

But I've been doing that. I mean that's why I'm here.

Mmm, yeah.

So I can look ... You know I'm planning for the future. There may be another step but you know the people I'm working with at the moment; we're planning a future for people like me and there'll be somewhere for me to slot in if I need it.

Mmm.

But meanwhile I have a very active life and, and I believe the more active you are, the better you are to keep active.

I don't know what I was ... I was trying to say something. I probably didn't express it very well because I sort of can see this, that you were in [name deleted] Cohousing.

Mmm.

And when you moved it was more to get some more space than ...

Yes.

It wasn't as though you were moving away from the community itself.

No, no. I might have been a little bit, because it was getting crowded with children but I liked the children. I loved them being around but it was more difficult for me, you know, I, I didn't want to be grandma and always available for babysitting. I wanted to keep on working.

Mmm.

And yet I wanted to help you know that. You get kind of ... You can easily ... Your time can just go in cohousing. There's such a lot to do and I feel quite responsible, you know when I was there.

Yeah.

Quite responsible for keeping the common house clean and everything looking nice and ...

Mmm and so here because you write, you've got more time to yourself to do the writing.

Yeah and also if I want someone to come to dinner I don't have to clean the common house before they come. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

And there wasn't room in my house to do much entertaining. So I can come home and I'll know it's easy to knock up a meal, you know, because it's all the way I would want it. That sounds really fussy but ...

Mmm, it's almost as ... Mmm, sorry ...

It sounds fussy, but that's how I feel, yeah.

But it's almost as though you were saying, you know, there's a lot of good things about cohousing but in fact if you did want to spend a lot of time on your own, it's harder to be in a place like that.

Yes, you can be on your own. It's designed like that but I didn't design a house that was like that. It wasn't enough for one to be on one's own. I mean it was tiny.

Mmm.

And if you're going to be on your well I needed work space. Because you think you need less space as you ... Or people generally think you need less space as you get older.

Mmm.

But you ... I need more because if you are working from home.

Mmm.

And doing more from home and spending more time at home and liking people to be with you, like my ... I have a kind of step daughter in Sweden and the whole family came over and it was lovely to have them all here in my house with me.

Mmm.

Not at the common house but around me.

So ...

I liked that too.

So how much room do you have here?

No much. It's 90 square metres but plenty.

Mmm, so you've got two bedrooms?

Yes.

Mmm. So you can ...

One is a study.

Oh so it's this bedroom plus a study.

Yes. The study's bigger but again I wanted, particularly after having a fire and realising much more about electronics, I didn't want any electronics in my bedroom. I didn't even have the clock radio in to begin with.

Mmm.

So that's my electronic room and this room is non-electronic.

Mmm. Yup and so ...

Peaceful.

So you have enough room. Like the family ... I don't know where they stayed when they came.

Well the living room's quite big.

Right.

And there were ... I had two mattresses there so the two girls could sleep there. My study's got a bed in it. I slept there and the couple had my bed.

Mmm.

Easy.

Mmm.

And you wouldn't want to do it for a very long time but it was ... We went to Maria Island you know and did other things. So this was perfect.

Mmm.

But they enjoyed cohousing too because they'd been here before and I think they, they enjoyed the mixture of people there. And I'm vegetarian. I think they were glad to be with some people who weren't vegetarian.

[Laughs.]

Because you know we had vegetarian common meals over there but other, other, in their own homes people could eat what they like of course.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Yes so when they had the meat meals it was in people's homes.

Yes, yeah.

Mmm. [Pause.] So what, what is likely to influence any changes you would make to your housing like, like you know as in either making major changes here or moving.

Mmm.

You ...

Mmm.

I think we went through that.

Yeah I did.

You said you'd put a ramp up.

I said I'll just have to put a ramp out.

Yeah.

And I've already got someone who's coming to look at that for me.

Mmm.

You never know if you're going to become really sick. You know that's...

Mmm.

That's, that's anybody's problem, however ... Whatever your age is.

Mmm.

You don't know how you're going to manage if you're sick. And, and I know that any kind of care how, whatever age or whatever your ability is, is being encouraged in the home, so ...

Yeah, very much.

Because I'm on one level and I've got room for someone to stay if needs be. I've got a little flat downstairs.

Mmm.

If I need someone to look after me, you know. I just think I'd better stay strong, but eventually you've got to face that fact that you may not be so strong. You know when the builder was here he was trying to put up aluminium rails for me in the bathroom.

Mmm.

And, the builders didn't do it and I didn't like them really but I thought perhaps I should. But because I've got a small bathroom, getting in and I've thought about this, getting up from the toilet, you know how people tip or forward sometimes getting out of the bath.

Mmm.

But I've got something that I could touch lightly or feel secure with, so I did think about those things. You know but ...

Mmm.

And I've got a railing to go downstairs. So it's only the driveway that I see as a problem and that's fixable. You know to have, you need things to hang onto if you're going down steep driveways if you're 85 or 90.

[Laughs.]

Although they say we're going to live to a hundred.

Yes.

Hell. [Laughs.]

Yes, so do you have a bath in your bathroom.

Oh yeah.

Mmm. And a walk in shower or?

No, hop over the bath.

Oh right.

Yeah. It's very simple Jan. It's, you know it's a budget building. [Laughs.]

I think you've done, I mean you've done very well to have come from the place in cohousing, the small ancillary flat, and to have been able to get a flat downstairs.

Well that was lucky. I wouldn't have manage it a year later. It was just at the right time and the flat downstairs means I've got ... There's a very lovely woman whose been there for a year and a half. She's just extended her lease. And we live our own lives but it's very nice to know there's someone there and that pays off my mortgage.

Oh.

Yeah.

Mmm.

Which I draw on when I need some money.

And so did you have any difficulty getting approval for the mortgage.]

Oh no, but that's a very interesting question. I could have had trouble but I, I think that before, that you need to shop with banks like you do with anything else, so I went to the ... I went to the banks I didn't want to bank with first and then I went to Bendigo who I did want to bank with so I went to the Commonwealth and they said no I was too old really. They said it in different language. I went to Connect and they said that's ages and we can do something. And then I went to Bendigo and they said, mmm you know they were really saying that I was too old and I said to them but Connect can do this. And they said well we can do better than that.

Mmm.

So it's the same old thing. You just have to shop.

So you got it with Bendigo?

I got it with Bendigo.

Mmm.

And for 30; 29 years I think it is.

Mmm.

What and I was seventy.

Mmm.

At the time, so.

[Laughing.] That's expecting to live till ninety-nine then, at least. [Laughing])

[Laughing.] *But you see because I chose well, [name of suburb deleted] is a very secure neigh ... They didn't even need to come and see it.*

Mmm.

And now it's worth more than double. Well who cares.

Mmm.

It's my home.

Mmm.

But on the other hand it's the security, if I do have to leave and I do want to buy into something.

Mmm, yes.

Yeah.

And the bank would have absolutely no worry getting their money back now.

No, no. They're more positive.

Mmm.

They tell me they'll lend me lots of money if I want to.

Mmm, yeah. But, so you're on an age pension?

Mmm.

And, that must be difficult then, with a mortgage. So the flat downstairs actually fully pays?

Mmm, yes. What I've done for a year is use some of my insurance money. I didn't have enough insurance money for my contents, but I used it very carefully and I shopped at St Vinnie's and I've got lots of second hand things, you know; and then the money, I paid off a year of my mortgage, so this year I'm living quite well, but I ...

You paid that with your insurance from your contents?

Yeah, yeah.

Mmm.

But, but it could get tighter. But you know I grew up in Depression years and I'm very happy with living simply.

Mmm.

And, I have little flourishes and I do travel sometimes but it doesn't bother me. I can live on a pension.

Mmm. Yeah, because I've heard a lot of people say that just the bare pension can be pretty tight and it helps to have something extra.

You just need a little bit extra.

Mmm.

But I don't smoke. I don't really drink. Uh, I don't buy newspapers. I don't pay for parking. I know they're little things.

Mmm.

But they mount up. So I use ... But I've got a really tip-top computer which gives me access to the news and which is a DVD because I haven't got a TV.

Oh.

Haven't got a microwave thing. So I chose to get ...

You used to have a TV?

Yeah. [Laughs.] Used to have that. That's the one that blew up.

[Laughs.]

But it was old and somebody had lent it to me, so I bought a good camera, a good computer, for things I wanted to work with.

From the insurance?

Yes, yeah.

Yeah, so, yeah, but basically on your pension then, I mean ...

I can live on a pension.

You would be in a similar position to someone who didn't have a mortgage because of the flat downstairs.

That's right; that's right.

Mmm. Yeah, I mean it's a very good set up I think.

Oh, yes.

If you're on a low income, to be able to have a conjoined flat.

Absolutely. And I, I try to tell that to people because it was something I looked for, knowing that I would be ... It would be a little bit tight. But my car just now, the clutch went and it was fourteen hundred dollars.

Mmm!

You know, now that's a hell of a shock when I've, I've also got a good car some time back, thinking that'll do, you know.

Mmm.

But the newer cars unlike the older cars, I had a 1982 Laser, which went ... Just got a bit worn but it did really well; but these newer ones, they, they're not meant for long lasting cars, so you get big bills like that.

Mmm.

And then you'd worry if you couldn't ... You, I mean you'd be stuck. And teeth ... And skin ... I just had my skin spots done.

Mmm.

It's very expensive. So I had a little leeway this year, to fix up a few things but definitely, if I hadn't got the flat I wouldn't be as comfortable because I get paid for my writing, but writers earn peanuts.

Mmm.

You know.

Mmm.

It's a joke.

So you get some royalties for publications?

Mmm, no, you don't get royalties from the kind of writing I do. [Laughs.]

So what you're publishing, but how do ... What's, what's the source of your income from your writing?

Well I publish. You know first of all, when it's academic, you don't get paid at all.

Mmm.

I do a lot of research which I send out and I do that without pay. I, I write poetry and creative writing and I get paid for that, but you know it's \$30 a poem.

Mmm.

And \$60 for a short story.

Oh, so this is for a publisher.

Yeah.

Mmm.

Yes, you don't earn much at all.

And so there's no ...

Even the best, even the best writers.

Yeah.

Aren't earning much money.

So you don't like, even though it's published, you don't get a percentage of the royalties, you just get a flat rate?

Yeah.

Mmm, goodness me.

Oh writers are really not doing well.

Mmm.

But people still keep on writing.

Mmm.

And it's a great thing to do when you're older because I've worked out too, my body's not going to last as long as my brain; mind you, you never know that and ...

Although it's been scientifically proven, I believe. [Laughs.]

Yeah but I've just been doing research on Alzheimer's and autism in relation to mercury and that's very enlightening too, but I won't talk about that now.

No, no. Mmm, yeah so you might live in a retirement type arrangement one day?

I can hardly see it.

Possibly.

Mmm, yeah well, well ...

But I mean as in the cohousing idea, which is adjacent to retirement units.

Yeah.

But it itself is more for older women, is it?

Yeah, it would be all right but you know I quite like ... I like living in a community that's a normal kind of community but it's there if one really needs it and how can I know.

Mmm.

Yeah. I'm just making as good as I can to last as long as I can.

Mmm.

It's just, it's this horrific thing of living to a very long age. [Laughs.]

Yeah. [Laughs.]

Mmm.

Yes. Mmm and so do you find people treat you differently, now that you're older?

I play games with that. They definitely do, but also people were wonderful to me. I've never had such care as I did, after the house burnt down. People really were great and lovely things happened to me. I, I won't go into them all. So there's that but, but if, but people can put you down because you're older and sometimes, because I'm Doctor [name deleted] and I'm not a medical doctor, I use it.

Mmm.

You know for instance when I wanted to get information about vaccines and it's only available for medical professionals, I ring up and I say it's Doctor [name deleted] because I want that information.

Mmm.

And if people are ... Like the builders, they used to call me Dr [name deleted] as a bit of a joke.

Mmm.

But I made sure that they knew that I knew what I was talking about.

Mmm.

And if I hadn't got a doctorate it would have been harder for me to get them to listen to me.

Mmm.

You know, so it's, perhaps a bit naughty but you know I, I, I do use it when people; when I want people to really listen to me and think that I, I might know what I'm talking about.

Mmm, yes it's often hard to prove on the spot, isn't it, [laughs] without something tangible.

Very much so.

Mmm.

Yes, yeah. And it sounds snobby but it's just that I don't want to be ignored. No.

Mmm. Yeah.

Yeah.

And that's what people do say. Some people say that, you know, specially say just in a shop or something, people don't notice them, you know.

No. I don't notice myself sometimes when I look at photographs. You kind of disappear.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *But also the architects I'm working with; they didn't, they didn't quite know what to make of me, you know, because they're used to facades; people looking terribly elegant.*

Mmm.

And young and smart. And, they're getting, they're getting to know me a little bit, but I don't think they really were listening at the beginning, and they're better now.

Mmm.

You know, so ... Yeah, people do go by appearances a lot.

Mmm. Yeah, and by their assumptions about a person.

And age and a person and that, yeah ...

Mmm.

And they're right sometimes. I mean I can be quite absent-minded.

Mmm.

But can't we all.

Yes, yes.

[Laughs.] *It's when you do too much. If you don't do too much ...*

Yeah, if you have a lot on your mind, yeah I think anyone ... I'm often absent-minded. I've been absent-minded most of my life. So it's nothing new. [Laughs.]

Yeah, yeah.

[Laughs.] Mmm.

Yeah.

So can you think of anything else that you'd like to tell me about, about your experiences of housing.

Oh.

Or your knowledge and wisdom.

Yes.

About housing.

Yes, well you know the most important thing for me, as you can tell from the things I'm talking about, is that we live healthily in a healthy environment.

Mmm.

If you can't live healthily in a sick planet.

Mmm.

And you can't be well in that kind of environment.

Mmm.

So I really work towards that for myself.

Mmm.

Which has made a lot of difference because I'm healthier now than I was.

Mmm.

I lived in a community where I couldn't say, I didn't want to live in, in a place that had been newly painted or with the fellow doing fibre-glassing downstairs.

Oh.

So I've got control.

At Cascade Cohousing?

Yes.

There was less awareness of those sorts of things.

Yeah. I mean I was the one who used to push it.

Mmm.

And, and really because as soon as the plaintain grass came up I had allergies, whereas here that's what, that's a trigger for me, you know as it is for a lot of people, plaintain grass.

Oh.

And rye grass. So here I can get rid of it. I can get someone to cut the grass all around me.

Mmm.

So I've got control over the environment as well, which is healthier for me.

Mmm.

And I can ask my neighbours to not let their chimneys smoke, which I have

Mmm.

And they haven't been ratty about it. It was an agreeable conversation, I'd say, because I used to be asthmatic.

Mmm.

Not before, but I had a period recently when I became asthmatic because of air pollution here.

Mmm. And so how can they manage that with their heaters?

You just have to make sure you're not feeding wet wood into the fire.

Mmm.

And that you don't close it down until it's roaring.

Mmm.

And then if you close it down at night you have to make sure that it's really going well; and if you see smoke coming out of the chimney; my windows get black because there's still some problem, but you should be able to adjust your fire and it has to be a decent fire. They're too old, most of the fires in...

Mmm.

In Cohousing.

I had noticed.

Yeah.

I had noticed that round here.

Yeah.

It does. It gets very smokey where I am.

Yeah.

And you see this terribly asphyxiating smoke spewing out of people's chimneys.

Yes, you do. You can spot it

Mmm.

It would be such an easy thing for Council to go round with a Ranger and they'll see them and say look, a warning you know, you're polluting and it's a health hazard. Because you can see there's not that many now. People are moving to cleaner energy like electricity and heat pumps and, and floor heating and all the rest of it and the, the wood heaters aren't the modern ones where there's a double cycle within the heaters. They're old. But mainly people here who are burning badly, there's a poverty problem.

Mmm.

And the wood isn't the right kind of wood.

Yeah, they're just burning whatever they can. Mmm.

And they go into the reserve and get, gathering ...

Oh do they?

Yes. We know that because there was a survey.

Oh.

Done on it.

Of around here?

Yes.

Mmm, so ...

And Dr John Todd at the University does that.

Oh.

Yeah.

Looks at where people get their firewood from?

Yeah.

Mmm. So what sort of heating do you have?

I've got Hydroheat which is spot heating because I didn't want a heatpump because they can be noisy.

Mmm, mmm.

They say they're not but they are. I had off-peak but they, I was coaxed into having Hydroheat which seems all right but I haven't had the bills yet. But it's very quick, I've got ... And it hasn't got a fan so that means I don't get dust.

Where have you got it?

See the flat panel here on the wall.

Oh yeah. So you've got that in each room?

Each room, yes, and I can warm up the whole house if I want to but because, you know if I'm going to work, it's quite comfortable to work in my room.

Mmm.

Or I, I heat my study.

Mmm, so do you have to turn each one on individually to heat the house?

Yes, yes.

Mmm, so ...

It's very controllable.

Mmm.

It heats fast and it cools fast.

And do you find it costly to ...

Don't know yet. [Laughs.]

Mmm.

[Laughs.] No it's going to be much more costly than where I lived before because living in 50square metres with a mezzanine means the heat rises.

Mmm.

And also I had a tiny little Op Shop heater which was only one thousand watts.

Mmm.

So this is 2,400 [watts] I've got here.

Mmm. In one little room. Mmm.

So it's going to be a lot different but you know, I want to be warm.

Yeah, so it's, it's a shame about, what you say at Cascade Cohousing if you know, you had particular needs or desires, you know about the healthy living environment, that people didn't really seem to listen to you or accommodate that.

Well, it might be a shame but on the other hand there's so much to do; so much to think about, and people were having babies.

Mmm.

You know. I mean that's when they should think about, because babies go into rooms

Mmm.

Where they shouldn't have toxic paints, but it was more bother; not much more bother and it was more expensive, not much more expensive, but, but you know when it comes to these things in any community, people who worry about sick buildings, or who work on it; it's my work.

Mmm.

My Ph. D.'s in environmental studies and so I've been thinking about these things for years and years and years.

Mmm.

And there are, you're, you're a minority and you have to accept you're a minority; and I did my best.

Mmm.

This is one of the things that Graham Meltzer noticed, that people's, minority people's needs weren't taken into account very much in cohousing generally.

Mmm.

Like, even to be vegetarian was very difficult at times.

Mmm.

The two big issues were animals and vegetarianism.

Yes.

Yeah.

In his book?

Yeah.

Oh I thought ...

Oh not in his book, for anywhere, that is what we know are the two big problems.

Oh yes, mmm.

People wanted animals and people wanted to eat meat but a lot of people really were very ethically concerned about eating meat and, and everyone could eat meat when they wanted to, so you'd think it wouldn't be that big a deal but then on the other hand sometimes they wanted a Christmas dinner, you know and their relatives were used to duck or ...

[Laughs.]

Turkeys; all those poor turkeys getting knocked off.

[Laughs.] But the common meals at Cascade Cohousing, they were always vegetarian?

They were. They were, and it worked well because we didn't have any smelly stuff, either to get rid of and ...

Mmm.

And we had great meals. Nobody ever complained about.

Mmm.

Bad quality of meals, mmm.

So what did you do for Christmas dinner then?

People could have it in their homes.

Mmm.

And then sometimes they might come over and have dessert or coffee or tea or ...

So you didn't have the Christmas dinner in the common house?

Mmm, we have, we always have a Christmas party but you know, that's mixed things and it's never a problem.

Mmm.

Well if it is ... It may be a problem for some people but it's not a problem with the food that turns up. It's a great feast.

Mmm.

Mmm, good fun. That's, that is a problem I think, again, it came up in Graham's book, that it was a problem everywhere, yes; and also organic, whereas the Cascade Cohousing there were one or two people there who were trying to be more organic, but there, the one or two people.

Mmm, so it's a minority again.

It's not money, because sometimes it's the wealthier ones who have got good salaries, but it's not a question of money.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Yeah, so, it's a thing in the general community too isn't it, that minority voices don't get heard.

Oh yes, but, you, you'd think that you were building something different.

Yeah.

But in lots of ways it was different, because other, other things were, that were environmentally very good, like the sharing of cars, terrific.

Mmm.

Hopping on the bus, you know, and not using the car so much; sharing child transport, you know going to schools and picking up the kids; recycling. We were very good at recycling. So there were lots of things that did work.

Mmm.

And I think it's always that way. You've got to look for the good things, otherwise you concentrate on the things that aren't so good. But for me, my health being good, [laughs] this is really important.

Mmm.

When I am exposed to chemicals, and I have had huge doses through my life, so it's probably why I'm more susceptible, but I sleep my life away. Whereas now, I can sleep a normal seven or eight hours and I know, I know that I'm not exposed to anything toxic.

Mmm.

And it's immediate.

And so in the cohousing project that you're working on.

Yeah.

I mean you must have some idea of the principles that work; the good things that you can, you know, use to inform that project.

Yes. I can see that it's getting more and more difficult though to do those things, because it's all right in those communities where they spend years, and they're building themselves and they're using recycled materials, but to do a project like this, that we're planning.

With a developer.

With a big developer. They're going to use prefabricated kitchens.

Mmm.

You know, that's the, that's the norm now; and they have melamine in them, off-gases. They're probably going to use bulk paints. It would be very hard for me to be able to say to them you should use bio-paints and I'll mix it.

Mmm.

So I don't know how that's going to work. I think I may have to pull back on that, to get an achievement, you know, to get the thing done.

Mmm.

Which is what happened up there too, but it's getting worse.

Mmm.

As we get, become a bigger population and the materials get shorter.

Mmm.

And time, people won't put the time into you know, fixing up recycled windows you know, to do something on this scale. It would be very hard.

Mmm.

But I might get them. There might ... Because architects are becoming more educated and just now, there's an exhibition on, you know, at the Long Gallery. And there's a lot there about sick buildings and energy efficient passive solar buildings. So people are becoming more educated and there are some things they can do.

Mmm.

Yeah. The paint's quite important because that paint's quite toxic.

Mmm. And yet, does it cost anymore this one.

Bit more, not much.

Yeah, because that's one of the things even with [name of retirement village deleted] I could see. It's a very good design with all the space, but with the cost of land going the way it is.

Yes.

It's going to be very hard to do it.

Yes, and they're aware of it. They've got to put more buildings on the land now.

Mmm.

So that you know, whereas now they've got a fee ... You've got a feeling of space.

Mmm.

They've got this big wide driveway.

Mmm. It's like a village.

It is like a village.

Mmm, mmm.

And they, you know, I just think they did a terrific job there but they won't be able to do it quite like that. They've got to put more places in; but the fact that there are three groups together mean that we can plan our, we can plan our environment [unrolling plan]. That's one of Council's requirements.

Mmm.

And we have to have walkways. So, and we're going to have a village green, so we may be able to compensate for the extra buildings.

Mmm.

Mmm. You know when you stand on this bit of green here, you know it's precious to the community.

Mmm.

And around here it's just built up, built up.

Mmm.

And there's cars, swoosh, swoosh and this is a new road that has to go in there.

Mmm.

So it's a precious piece of land. Everybody's going to be after it. But Council are really aware that they've got to do something a bit different because the community's really concerned about losing this land. So they should be.

Mmm.

If that's like every other developer, you know, plonk, plonk, plonk, plonk.

Mmm

It's going to be very, very sad.

Yeah so to do this sort of project you need land like that; in a good location.

It's perfect but it's ...

But it could be controversial to get the planning approval.

Well this isn't as controversial for the community as something that's dense. This isn't considered dense.

Oh right.

So this is less controversial because it's inviting to the community ...

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 35

How long have you lived here?

Ah, three and a half years.

And where did you live before you moved here?

For about four and a half years I was renting a one room unit. That was one, one room that contained my bedroom and kitchen and a separate bathroom/laundry.

And what led to you moving here?

It's a long story.

Mmm, mmm.

Many years ago I had a desire or well, no, had a feeling that living in separate houses in different ... Was ... I found it uncomfortable and then I recognised that as a child growing up, oh, we lived on a farm but the farm was there and my father's parents and brothers lived within a five minute walk and we spent a lot of time interacting, so I was always surrounded by lots of people, that really knew me, sort of and as I got older, and was an adult, it wasn't there and recognised that that's what was missing and when I heard of I thought that was a pretty good substitute.

Mmm. So how did you hear about cohousing.

[Sigh.] When I first came to Tasmania, the ... What is now Cascade Cohousing were getting together. That might have been about 14, 15 years ago.

Mmm.

And then I heard about this group that were getting together.

Mmm.

And ah, I ... Cascade Cohousing is privately owned and I didn't have the finances and still don't, to be able to buy into something like that and so this is a golden opportunity.

Mmm.

To live here.

Yeah, so can you tell me about how you, you know, came to apply.

Mmm, mmm.

And came to live here.

I ... The, the group that are here now, and they've been here about five years; prior, prior to that they'd been meeting for many years. I didn't have a car so that, I had thought about going to their meetings but hadn't because it always seemed a bit too difficult and ...

Mmm.

To get to, getting in to that situation. About ten months prior them to moving in here, so the construction was well under way, I heard that there were places, that people had pulled out.

Mmm.

And so there were some vacancies. I applied then.

Mmm, so you had your name down for a while before you ...

Yes.

Got in.

So at that stage I didn't get in.

Mmm.

And stayed in contact with, a group of us were interested in seeing if we could, get the public housing in Saunders Crescent and set it up there as a cohousing.

Mmm.

And that brought me back in contact with this group again and when this place that I'm in now, became vacant [pause] I got to be here.

Mmm, mmm.

Mmm.

Mmm and what do you like about living here?

Mmm [pause] I like that I have contact with people very easily. It's just a matter of going to check to see if there's mail there or whenever you go out, out your front door, more than likely there's someone around to say hullo to.

Mmm, so there are people around during day.

Ah well there's, you know, yes, there are some people here during the day; and especially in the early morning and late afternoon, heh.

Heh, mmm.

Lots of children here.

And how do you feel about that?

Fine. It's, it's a great bunch of parents and the children are all quite delightful and there's just no [pause] big dramas at all.

Mmm, so you find people here help each other.

They do, yeah.

Can you give me some examples?

Mmm. mmm, well just the other day one of the other women here, her car very, very died, apparently [laughs] and, the next day she needed to go out and check up what was happening with her car, et cetera, et cetera, and uh she was able to borrow somebody else's car.

Mmm, mmm, so there's enough trust here amongst the residents for ...

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah. They help each other by, well the children just move around between the group, you know, from house to house quite freely and, and the parents, the adults are very ... Can communicate in such a way that you know, parents, people can say no that their children they are having quiet time or family time and the other children just move off.

Mmm.

Or they stay and they have children over for, other children over for morning tea or whatever, you know and there often ... It'll often, seems to be that, there'll, there'll be clusters of children in houses, all playing together.

Mmm.

In two or three houses.

So does this sometimes happen here?

Sometimes, not, not regularly, and not a lot but sometimes.

Mmm, but you've got control over whether you have them here or not?

Oh yeah, and I have no problem. They never, there's no, they don't infringe on my, physically infringe. They are quite ah, noisy and active but, it's not, not intrusive. If it was I, or if it is, I can just ask them to be quiet and they do. [Laughs.]

Mmm.

It hasn't happened. It's only happened a couple of times.

Mmm, mmm, and do you feel safe here?

[Pause.] *Yes I do, mmm.*

Mmm, is there some qualification about that?

Oh well, I was thinking about what, what it actually meant, you know saying do I feel safe here. When I first moved here it was certainly a matter of getting to know ... Because I didn't know many. Well I didn't really know anybody here.

Mmm.

Ah, just as acquaintances, and so [sigh] there was a little bit of sort of checking out a couple of [pause], one or two people in particular just to see what sort of boundaries they had and, and how that might infringe on mine. So ...

Mmm.

That's a qualification but [sigh] there was no problems and I, yeah ...

So you're saying, emotionally and socially safe, but there was territory to negotiate when you first came here.

Yeah.

Because of people living so closely, I guess.

Mmm, mmm.

That you saw possibly a potential for conflict or ...

Well no it was just one person who was a visitor here.

Mmm.

In particular, who, mmm ... He just ha, has a different culture and a different way about him and I just wasn't sure what, what sort of boundaries he had or what, how far he'd push.

Mmm.

I don't know. It's rather vague but there was no problem with it in the sense that once I ... It's just part of me establishing for myself, people around me.

Yeah, so you did feel ...

[Sigh.]

Some sort of uncertainty?

[Sigh.] *Unease, yeah, an uncertainty at first, yeah.*

Mmm, and that's been resolved.

Oh yes, very quickly, mmm.

Mmm.

Mmm, it took a few weeks to easily establish that.

Mmm.

Mmm.

And so, is there anything you don't like about living here?

What don't I like about living here? Mmm [pause]. Well I can't even ... I can't say it's the lack of privacy because I, it's very easy. If I feel I had ... I can sometimes feel like I have too much interaction, with people.

Mmm.

But I am like that anyway and I've always been like that and I've always had to find my own space [sigh], and I have no difficulty doing that here.

Mmm.

Shut the door, we have little signs that say you're asleep, or you know, there's a face that says, you know, don't sort of enter. [Laughs.]

On your door?

That we can put on our door, yeah.

Oh, mmm, mmm.

And ah, you put that out and that's respected.

Mmm.

And, and you just don't yeah, so it's very easy; and to walk through the community if you were feeling; I mean it's something we talk about from time to time. If people just don't feel like interacting you can just [sigh] very easily walk through and if you can [sigh] get to, yourself to a position where you can smile and nicely and say hullo, hullo and just keep walking.

Mmm, mmm.

People accept that and there's no intrusion on it. So ah, what, the question was what don't I like about here. I sometimes find the fact that we're a co-operative and therefore we're self-managing, means a lot of work.

Mmm.

And, sometimes, I can feel ... Oh, it's not something that I've ever wanted to do which is manage property; be a property manager which is what we are.

Mmm.

And [pause] which is partly why I haven't, don't own my own home, but I'm in the position now of being, as a member of the co-op, responsible for the management of the property, so.

Yeah, so having to make decisions, and group decisions about ...

Yes and work out ...

Mmm.

Group decisions and perhaps the group, while the essence is the group decisions, this is actually just the physical thing of doing things.

Mmm.

Like just being on the property committee and washing machines need ... Playing up, so you've got to get the mechanic. You've got to get the ... He comes. He comes early in the morning. You've got to take him up, let him into the common house ... Be around if he has any questions to ask. [Laughs.] Uh, you know, recently the ... There was some work, electrical work that needed doing on the common house so I had to, as part of my job on property, once more get in contact with them, out ... And then when they come, outlining what work's got to be done. Be there sort of over a period ...

Mmm.

Of three and a half hours to, to be around and so it takes a lot of time.

Mmm, so did this ... Did you choose this role in the community?

[Pause.] Yes. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

But we rotate.

Oh right.

So we do different things.

So you don't have to do it all the time.

No.

Mmm, because you're one of the people who's [pause], can be here during the day.

Yes, yeah.

Mmm.

Mmm.

And, do people just go in and out of each other's houses, for ... Or are there some people who do and some people who don't; or I mean, do you leave your door unlocked during the day or ...

People will [pause], adults certainly don't.

Mmm.

I notice even like, nobody comes here without knocking, first of all on the door before, and being asked in.

Mmm.

And I think they have pretty much that sort of rule with the children.

Mmm.

Going into each other's homes as well, that they have to actually knock and ...

Mmm.

Yeah.

Because that's one of the keys I think, isn't it, to living successfully in a communal setting.

Mmm.

Is respect each person's private space.

Mmm, we certainly find that and I've never had, anybody come to my door and kind of, even I felt, I just haven't felt uncomfortable with anybody who's come into my home and [sigh] kind of wanted to check it out or ... I don't know. You know, it just hasn't happened.

Mmm.

I haven't had that sort of thing, feeling at all.

And so, you chose to live here and I suppose when you moved in you therefore had some expectations of what it was going to be like and so, how different have you found it from what you expected?

Mmm.

Must be some things that are better than you expected and some things that are worse?

Because I had been at Cascade Cohousing and I'd done some house sitting there.

Mmm.

Besides having my son and his family living there; and so I would stay with them from, for a couple of days and then I house sat one of the houses there for about three months.

Mmm.

And there was other times when I was staying at my son's house while they were away for ten days.

Mmm, so you had a pretty realistic idea.

I had quite an idea of, of what cohousing meant.

Oh.

And so I don't think ... Other than having to move into a whole different group of people and, and ... So that, there was that for me ... [Sniff].

Well there must be some differences. You said, this being a co-operative.

Yes. That was the management. There's a lot more ...

More onerous.

More onerous, yes, but I was aware of even that and, I think in some ways I could almost say I'm even surprised at just how much I have enjoyed that property management as well; as well as the living in cohousing and the common meals. And I, I don't mind cooking the common meals. I quite enjoy going to the social side of it ...

Mmm.

Yeah.

How often do they happen?

We have ours here every, once every four days. Yeah, every fourth day.

Oh, so it just ... What, any day of the week?

Yeah, any day of the week. Yeah, and we find that it seems to work because people have, different work commitments ...

Mmm.

And, find it difficult to work and cook on the same day, so it kind of just yeah.

So if you had it on the same day every week, there'd be some people who always couldn't go, sort of thing.

Yes.

But, mmm.

Yeah, so it seems to work pretty good.

And does everyone participate?

Yes, yeah.

Mmm.

Mmm.

And, can you think of any way that your housing here could be improved? I mean, no situation's perfect, you must admit.

Yeah. [Laughs.] One of the things that I personally, with just my house, I, I find it's, it's great inside. There's been no, ah ... Nothing that I've needed to have different. I do find ... I have found the outside, because the landscaping wasn't originally, when the place was built, the landscaping just was ... The money had run out and so there was very limited ah, landscaping done around the houses and, so that's been a bit of a [sigh] something I've had to struggle with because I don't like using the whipper-snipper or the mowers or I don't, just don't use them. And ...

Mmm.

Other pe ... So I've had to rely on other people here to do it, and they have done it but it's just that difficulty of I want it done now and to get it done now may not be the appropriate time for who ever's just going to do it for me, off their own bat, so.

Mmm, so they, what ... You've got lawn at the back? That used to be lawn.

I haven't got lawn anywhere. [Laughs.]

But, but the whipper-snipper then.

Yes, there was lots of grass around here, yeah.

Mmm and so, uh like places where they, it's not finished off and so ...

Yes it's not. This place has been dug in at the back and so there's embankments at the back.

Mmm.

That, that still hasn't been, organised, and, and I'm slowly ... I mean it's, it's kind of one of the things too is that, some people here have ... We all have, just about every household, has a completely different idea of [laughs] what they want the outside; their, their garden to be like and ...

Mmm.

And, and I've not ever had a garden that's been my complete responsibility before, so it's a new thing for me too, huh.

Huh, mmm. And so what sort of garden do you want to have I mean?

A low maintenance garden.

Yeah.

And I'm slowly working on that and it's slowly starting to happen actually.

Mmm.

But it's taken three and a half years to get to that, and if I'm disappointed with anything it's, or you know, it's an expectation; I didn't think it would take me that long.

Mmm.

And that, that's been a mixture. The money ... There's been money available, to do that, but it's very much been part of the, the policy here is that people can ... There's a house allocation and you can use that within your, inside and outside your home.

Mmm.

However you would like, heh.

Mmm.

I mean there's certain restrictions, like outside for example, that's limited to paving and maybe screens and maybe some rock walls and retaining walls.

Mmm. So have you used the allocation for the garden? You have been doing that?

Mmm, that's what I've been using on the garden.

Mmm.

Yeah.

So what have you done?

Well I've just recently had a wall that was already built, ah, a timber wall, but it was very unsatisfactory and uh, wasn't really in the right place, so had to pull that out and I've just had a new rock wall put in.

Oh, so you took out a retaining wall.

Yeah, a retaining wall.

Mmm.

Mmm, and some paving done. So I'm actually very excited about that. [Laughs.]

[Laughs] So you have a nice area to sit outside?

Yes.

On the sunny side?

Yes.

Yes it's nice there.

Which I didn't have ... It just ... The way it was before it was just all grassy and overgrown and I wasn't able to manage myself.

Mmm.

So hopefully I've got it a lot better.

Yeah, so the paving will help it be low maintenance.

Yes.

So you're not thinking of moving somewhere else then?

Not at this point in time, no.

And you're not planning to make any major alterations to the, to the house?

No.

Mmm, and so do how do you feel about growing older here? You feel you're going to stay here?

At this point I feel quite comfortable with it.

Mmm.

It's, even as it is I've, wouldn't, this, this house only has two steps, from the living area up into the sleeping area.

Mmm.

And the ... There's one other house that's the same here and the rest of them are two storey and I wouldn't even at this point, I find going up and downstairs is not [sigh] a comfortable thing for me to do, but this little house is, I think will see me for quite a long time. [Laughs.]

So you've got a problem with your knees or something?

Yeah.

Mmm, and what about the entrance? Are there steps out there?

Yes, there are.

Mmm.

At this stage it's ok.

But all in all this site, it is pretty accessible and level isn't it.

Yes, yeah.

Whether that's designed for people with babies in prams or whatever.

Yeah.

Mmm, mmm, so do you think about that sort of thing? Do you think about ...

The future?

Only in terms, it sounds as though, you think you are going to be reasonably comfortable here.

Yes, [pause] *ah at this point ah ... I mean there is the, the thing of 20 years down the track when, when you're getting ... I don't know, at, at this point it feels to me as if this will see me for a long time.*

Mmm.

And especially because of this low step.

Mmm, and it looks like the house is easy to look after. It looks ...

Yes.

Low maintenance.

Yeah.

Mmm.

Yup.

And what about like, services?

For what sort of services, sorry?

Well in terms of, you know, your ability to access the services you need or generally use, from here I mean?

From here?

Yeah. Do you drive?

No.

Mmm. So you need to use the bus?

I use the bus, yeah.

And how do you find that?

Oh, I've been using the bus for about six years now and I find it no problem, mmm.

Mmm, so what do you mean you've been using it for six years? You didn't use it before that?

No.

Did you have a car before?

Yeah.

Oh. And so, what, you've chosen not to have a car now?

Yeah.

Mmm, and so, because people complain about the bus service up here. I've heard people say it's not often enough and you can't go out after night.

[Laughs.] *Well you can't go out at night. [Laughs.] That is a difficulty.*

Yes, so how do you manage with that?

I don't go out a lot at night. [Laughs.]

That means you're home for interviews, which is good isn't it.

[Laughs.] *But I also ... Part of my budget is that I allow a certain amount for taxis you know and if I do decide to go out at night, usually you might be able to go into town by bus but to get home, I can, I go, it's not that far and it's not a ... It's a reasonable amount to cope with and so you know, once a month or so, whenever, I can go out at night and I can uh, just get a taxi home.*

Mmm, and sometimes you could get a lift too, depending on who you were going with.

Yeah, but you know, it's, it's sort of, the taxi ... I, like during the day, the bus from here ... Oh, Sunday's not real good. There's not that many on Sunday but for the rest of the time during the day they're every half hour.

Oh.

And you know ...

That's excellent.

That's excellent and for me it's often just as, it's easier to hop on the bus and go into town and ... Than to get someone, if someone gives me a lift because then they've got to stop somewhere and let me out.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

And all that kind of thing.

[Laughs.] Yeah but the buses can stop at bus stops.

Yes. And ...

And there's no parking problem.

It's only 15 minutes and I'm not worried about someone putting, yes and so ...

It's cheaper than the petrol.

Yes. So, no I, I find that it's good and the fact that it's so close to town and the facilities that I might want means that bus fares aren't, exp ... I can, I can accomm ... What's the word I want? I can have that taxi when I need it.

So what's your main source of income?

Centrelink [pause] customer [laughs].

Oh right, yeah.

Mmm.

Mmm, so that means things are pretty tight and you've got to manage.

Yeah.

Quite carefully.

Yeah.

Which is one good reason not to have a car I suppose.

That's one good reason not to have a car.

Because you can manage if you don't have one.

Yes, yeah.

Yeah, very expensive to run a car, especially an older one.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Mmm, so what about your kids? You've got a son you mentioned.

I've got two sons.

Mmm.

And they've each got children. I've got three grandchildren.

And they're both in Tassie?

Yes they are and I have the grandchildren here, a lot.

Mmm.

Like every other weekend they'll be here. One or two or three of them here, huh.

Mmm, and so you actually sort of mind them on weekends.

Oh, they come and stay.

Mmm.

And so, like what I've got here is a two bedroom place and that's excellent.

Mmm.

Although my grandson told me the other day that I actually need a bigger place so that each grandchild can have their own bedroom. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

But, no it's good to, to be able to have the, the two bedroom place.

Mmm.

Mmm. [Pause.]

It's certainly a lot better than what you had before.

Oh, much better than the one-room unit.

Mmm. So do you think, is anything likely to influence future changes you might want to make to your housing?

[Pause.]

You know, if money's no object, you know.

Oh, if money's no object I don't know quite what I'd do. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

[Pause.] *I, I really ... I do like living in cohousing.*

Mmm.

And you know in some ways I wouldn't like to have to leave here.

Mmm.

Because I do like being here and being part of this community.

Mmm, because some people leave when their financial circumstances change. You would have had a few households like that, yeah.

We have.

Yeah.

We've had people who've left to buy their own home.

Mmm.

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, but as you said you don't think you're going to be in a position to buy.

Well yes, I think it's somethin ... It's not sort of something that I'm ... It's certainly not something that I'm working towards, is buying my own place, no.

But as you get older, if there are still a lot of young children here ... It may not be the case, but I mean how do you think you might find that? It's hard to tell now, how you'd feel in the future, but ...

Mmm.

I mean, it's not uncomfortable for you now, but some older people talk about, you know, that if children are too close and too noisy and, you know, even having to tell them to...

Be quiet. [Laughing.] Yes, you don't want to have that.

[Laughs.] Mmm.

[Sighs.] *Mmm, I don't know. [Pause.] It doesn't [sniffs] ... My experience for myself within my family is, my mother, sin ... I mean, she doesn't live in a cohousing and she doesn't have like young children around but, ah lots, but she does have young grandchildren and great grandchildren which she has around quite a bit and she doesn't seem to ... And my great, and my mother's mother [sigh] also had lots of children around.*

Mmm.

Grandchildren around and, so ...

So for your family, it's something it's something that people, like ...

Yes, yes, it's something that ...

Are comfortable with.

That are comfortable with.

Mmm.

And I do know people ... I do have well a couple of friends in particular, who've been here to visit me and say they just couldn't take it.

Mmm.

They wouldn't be able to ... They wouldn't like to live here, so I don't know. You know, at the moment it's just not an issue for me.

Yeah, mmm.

Mmm.

And so do you find that people treat you differently, now that you're older?

[Sniffs.] *Yes. People, young people stand back and let me hop on the bus first. [Laughs.]*

[Laughs.] And how do you feel about that?

At first, I've always had an issue with not having people stand back and let me on first, but, I've noticed more recently I don't go into insisting they go first, just hop on the bus. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] At this point I don't find it ... I mostly find it's just, just sort of more or less a respectful thing and I don't find any difficulty coping with it. [Laughs.]

Mmm, mmm.

But yes, there is a, there are ... I think there is a difference, yeah, but it doesn't feel like a bad difference.

So you don't feel you're being discriminated against because you're older? [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Not at this stage, certainly not, no.

And did you feel in moving in here, your age was a consideration?

For the people here?

Mmm. Yes. Because it's a selection process, isn't it?

There is a selection process. I think originally when ... In, that the two ... Originally the woman who got the place that I, I, I had applied for was a single young woman.

Mmm, oh.

And ...

She didn't have children?

No, she didn't have children, no. And [pause] at that time they had a lot of physical work. They painted the inside of these houses. Yep, each person that moved in, they had to paint the inside of their home, and I was really concerned about how I was going to cope with that.

Mmm.

I was sort of lining up family members and friends to say, please come and help me because I just didn't think I'd be able to. Well I knew I couldn't do it.

Mmm.

So I think ... I'm pretty sure at that stage that she, the person who got in here, seemed to be younger and have a lot more energy for it. And then I think, when I did come in here, it, it had more reached a

point where they'd ... Where that initial stuff had happened, and because of the experience ... Because I'd been involved in, as I said, trying to look at [name deleted] and ...

Mmm.

Getting public housing into a cohousing there, that maybe I had something to offer in, in more in the policy formulation and the general running of the place, and that ...

Oh, so you were able to offer that?

Yes.

Mmm.

So I had experience in that sense. Rather than at the beginning, it was a lot more like energy and, physical energy and that, that was needed.

It sounds almost like applying for a job.

[Laughing.] Yes.

[Laughing.] Yes.

Yes.

Yes and so yeah, when you came in, a lot of the establishment work had been done.

Yes. Like physical stuff and it's still a lot of, yeah, more plugging away at the bookwork that's required, mmm.

Mmm, so you do some of that too?

Yup.

Mmm.

All part of being property is, part, sort of recording what you're doing and keeping records, mmm.

Costs and everything.

Yeah, what jobs have been done et cetera.

Mmm, so is there anything else you'd like to tell me, about living here?

Mmm. Well I think for myself personally, as I, I'm someone who can ... I have had a tendency in my life to hibernate and to keep away from people, as much as I can and being here it gives me the, it forces me into having to walk and say hullo to people and I like that.

Mmm. So you feel that you're less isolated than you used to be when you were renting the one-room unit.

Not the one-room unit. That was delightful. [Laughs.]

Oh, was it!

Because it was an older couple who, who lived upstairs.

Oh right.

So I had ... And they were very easy. I had just ... It was something like even living here, it was a matter of you know easy, ah ...

Oh, so where was that?

In [name of suburb deleted], yeah. I, I mean living there where I was before I came here was a choice and I knew that's what it was going to be so, yes ... I don't ... No, I won't say that it's less isolated here.

Mmm.

It was just that, an awareness, that I have of where I live, as to having it that I don't feel isolated.

But there are some things better about living here than there or you wouldn't have come here.

Yes.

Yeah, I don't know what those differences are.

Well certainly, I enjoy the common meals. It's good too for socialising and I like that. I like that I can be here and I don't have to, go out to socialise. I, because I've got the, the social thing can happen here.

Mmm, so have you got friends here?

[Sigh, pause.] ... Not ... I wouldn't s ... I don't quite know [sigh], I mean different people have different ideas of friends. I could certainly walk to ... There are, there are households here where if I was really distressed, well I could go to anybody in this community.

Mmm.

If I was distressed and needed to talk about something and I know that any house would open there door and [sigh], and be supportive, and there are a couple of households where I know I just can, we can share confidences about stuff that's going on, so.

Mmm.

Yeah.

So some you just go to for a social chat.

Yes.

But you know, anyone.

Yeah.

So compared to where you were before, I mean, the things I can see are, you've got a lot more room here.

Yes.

Your grandchildren can stay, but, is it more affordable? Or is it...

Yes, ah well, it's not. I, I actually ... It does cost more here but it is within the, the ... It's, certainly, it's not. They're less than market rent here.

Mmm.

And that's part of it because we're ... It's based on income.

Yeah, because uh ...

And it's secure.

Mmm, yeah, yes you don't ... You know you're not going to have to move.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Mmm. So that's ... That is ... I hadn't thought of that but that's certainly very important.

So had you ... Is this the first time you've had secure housing then?

Not the first time in my life, no.

Oh, so you were a home owner at one stage?

Yes, yes.

Mmm.

Yeah, yeah.

And so there was a marriage break-up and a property settlement?

Yes.

And you didn't end up with enough to buy?

I could've. I could've.

Or weren't in a position where you could sustain a mortgage?

Well yeah, I couldn't sustain a mortgage, yeah.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Yeah. And so ...

I chose not to get, put myself in a position of having to struggle with that.

Yeah, because yeah, when you're marginal in the housing market.

Mmm.

Some people do find it a real struggle.

Mmm, mmm.

There's no doubt about that and they usually end up with a lower standard of housing, mmm. So, I don't know how much more there is to go. So is there anyone else you think I could talk to, or?

Do you want? What sort of?

Well it's single older women, basically, in different sorts of housing situations.

Mmm, mmm, in ... No, not really. I can't think of anybody. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

You probably know most of the people that I know. Older people. Older women.

Mmm.

Mmm.

I don't know if there's anything else, unless you can think of something. I don't know how much of this is left. Not ... Oh, there's still a bit. There's still a bit.

Mmm.

Yeah. Yes, so what haven't I asked you.

Or what haven't I clearly answered. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

I, I could say again that ... And it isn't something that sort of rose up as being important. What I, I see ... The standard of housing I have here, is very. I like the, the timber floors and the kitchen, ah, the way it's done, and so, yeah, so that's good.

I have heard there are some issues though with the standard of workmanship in the building and the finishing off of things. You haven't had any problems like that here?

Yeah, my bathroom's not the best.

Huh, huh.

And that's a building problem, yeah ...

Is that fixable?

Well we had problems with the paving and we were the ones who had, supervised and engaged the contractor for the paving here. And we ... I got ... Ah, we had to get other contractors in to have a look at getting it fixed and what might be fixable and he ... One guy said, yes it is a bit of a problem but anything's fixable. So yes, the bathroom's fixable. [Laughs.]

But it hasn't been fixed yet?

It's not an inconvenience at the moment, yes.

So what's the problem with it?

It's just the tiles haven't been done in such a way ... They're not ... They're not sealed properly and so water's getting in behind the tiles.

Oh, so what sort of a problem's that causing?

At the moment where the bath meets the tiles there's moisture getting in behind and so where you've got the paintwork that's coming out from the bath there's an area where, obviously, it's the plaster board's soft.

Oh.

You can stick your finger into it.

Oh dear, that's terrible. Mmm.

[Laughs.]

And ah, but it could rot the wood or if there's a wooden frame.

Well it is. I mean one bathroom has been ...

So all the bathroom's are like that?

Fixed up already. I don't know if all of them are but I know mine, and there's another one, and, and you know, in, in management of the place, sometimes I can feel quite [laughs] distressed at how much has to be done and how much it is obvious that needs doing and we're not doing.

Mmm, yes so ...

Like this is something that, you know, they're ... We've been aware of this and so we're not quite you know getting to the point of ah, following up and getting it sorted out.

Mmm, yeah, because it's a new place and you expect everything to be right.

Mmm.

You wouldn't expect to have to do that sort of work.

Mmm, mmm.

So it sounds like the plasterboard will have to be replaced. You'll have to take the tiles off and you'll have to reseal it, somehow.

Yeah, yeah.

Mmm, do you think that is a building problem, that it wasn't properly sealed when it was done. As opposed to, you know, the use of plasterboard with tiles on it. I suppose that's used quite a lot.

Yes, I mean I, I would think that it is an original problem ...

Building problem.

Mmm, mmm.

Yes, I suppose ... I mean, I don't know because I've got an old house but there must be a lot of places with tiles on plasterboard, where the, the water doesn't get in.

Mmm.

But ... Mmm.

Yeah.

But in terms of the design, you, you know ...

I'm quite happy with my design but I feel there are other places here that ... It's not necessarily the most solar friendly place, over all. My, my place is.

Mmm.

But others I don't think are as good as they could be, taking the best advantage of the site because it is a good site. I mean it's [inaudible] enough.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Well what about heating?

It's ... The heating's quite comfortable.

Mmm, so what sort of heating do you have?

Electric.

Oh yeah, it is comfortable and is that expensive to run?

Yes. [Laughs.]

So about how much does that cost you a quarter?

Well we, we've got a system worked out here which is following [name deleted] Cohousing. All of the, each house has it's own meters.

Mmm.

But we have one, one metre really and, that means that we get reduced rent.

But so you only pay for what you use?

Yes.

But even with the reduced rate you still find it costly?

It's ... Yes it's not as ... But then I can get carried away and say, when I moved down here from Queensland I was shocked at how much the electricity was down here [sigh] and that wasn't even taking into consideration the heating. It was just at that time, I don't know how it works now, the electricity down here was dearer than what it was in Queensland.

Mmm.

So it's quite a hefty lump of your ...

Especially in winter, mmm.

Fortnightly budgeting.

So how do you manage that?

Ah, well we've been able to work out a system here so we can balance it out through the year.

Oh.

You know, even it out.

Oooh!

And so you know.

Fantastic, so you don't get one, big bills in winter.

Yes.

You actually pay a certain ...

Amount.

A regular amount each week.

Yes and then we'll you know, after twelve months we review the whole thing again and see how it ...

And if, if yes ... And, and the rent ...

If you're paying too much or too little.

Yes or yeah.

So it's what people ... It's just a form of budgeting really isn't it.

Yes.

I mean, some people do that anyway.

Mmm.

Just set aside so much per fortnight for bills.

Mmm.

Yeah. But it must, it must be helpful to be able to do that.

It's very helpful.

Because if you were on your own you couldn't do that, could you.

No. And, and yes, it's ...

I mean you couldn't ...

Because we're all low income earners here.

Mmm.

It's been something that we've really had to work out because electricity is such a big part of your budget.

Mmm.

And to be able to work it out in such a way that, you know what you're paying and ...

So you pay what fortnightly or weekly?

Well we pay fortnightly but what we're doing is, is a sort of like a projection. This is ... And we don't have to ... We were doing it differently from what we were doing now and that meant that [sigh] we were paying so much but then there was a difference between what we paid and what the bill was.

Mmm.

So we were getting bills of \$50 a quarter or whatever.

Mmm.

So what we, we've done now is, we've set an amount and if there's any difference the co-op pick that up.

Oh.

So it comes out of our rent and then you know, at the end of 12 months we'll review it.

Mmm and put more money on top of it.

And maybe we'll all have to put more, or whatever, but we're not going to have to make up that difference.

Mmm.

So that, that's ... It took us a little while to get our head around that.

Mmm, so that's something where the co-op can help to improve, you know the affordability of living costs for the members.

Yes, and, and ... Well it's the affordability, but we're not actually paying less, if you know what I mean. It's just that we ... The way of doing it and paying it, a certain amount.

Oh, so the co-op will pick it up and then you adjust it.

Yes, a certain amount.

The following year.

Yes, yes.

So it balances but it means that you don't have a sudden expense.

Expense, yes.

That's right. That's my perception.

Huh, yes. So that, that's something ... It's really appreciated by all of us, being low income earners it's, it's excellent. [Laughs.]

Mmm, because some co-ops do all sorts of things to help their members. I mean you were saying that, that doesn't pick up the bill but you know, I don't know what they do, but you know, whether it's a rent holiday at Christmas time or something like that.

Yes.

But they do, do things because they're low income earners and that, you know, that... Well people, I suppose, choose among themselves how they ...

Mmm, how they do it.

Mmm.

Mmm, mmm.

If anything, in this sort of housing you have that flexibility.

Mmm.

I mean public housing does do that sometimes I believe too, but there's a lot less flexibility.

Mmm.

There.

Mmm. A lot more work in it. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] *Yeah.*

Yeah. But if you're a home owner you've got to manage your own house anyway, haven't you.

Well yes, yes.

So, and people often don't manage it very well either. They're usually not very well informed.

Mmm.

They don't paint it when it needs to be painted, that sort of thing.

Mmm, mmm.

I think. I know I'm one of those, because of the cost. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

But at least here, in your rent, you're putting away, you know.

Mmm.

There's money going away to cover these things.

Mmm. People have said, that being here they actually ... And being ... Because we're property managers [laughs], there are skills that people are learning that assist them in, in other ways. And, one of the couples that have sort of left here and bought ... It's the first home that they have owned.

Mmm.

And certainly, there was things that they ... In being here and being property managers here, they ... Participating in that. That there were different things that they had picked up.

Mmm.

And while there's a lot more to be learnt [laughing], they have got some skills from that.

Mmm, I suppose part of that is pooling the knowledge of the group too.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Mmm

Mmm and so is there anything as a group that you do to develop people's skills?

[Pause.] *Nothing formal although it's certainly part of ...*

There's no training or professional advice?

No. Well yes ... Well there is. We've had a couple of workshops, of sort of ... Just in, interaction between people.

Mmm.

And how to manage that. We've got people here who've got computer skills and some who don't, and so there's always that ongoing thing where people are showing others how to do it.

But people get sick of that after a while I think. [Laughs.] Even with neighbours. I've had that.

[Laughs.] Yes.

They get sick of helping you out.

[Laughs.]

Or friends.

But, so yeah we've got that and I mean if the need was such, like with our accounting system, MYOB, we've had ... The people who do that ...

[Tape stopped.]

Interviewee 36

Thirty- five years.

Mmm. And can you tell me about where you lived before you moved here?

At [name of suburb deleted].

Mmm, and what led to you moving here?

The house wasn't big enough because I was about to have my fourth child.

Oh.

So I had to ... We had to move out of the house at [name of suburb deleted]. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Mmm, and yeah so, yeah, so that's a long time ago isn't it.

[Inaudible.]

There's been many changes in your housing situation since then.

Yes, there has, yes.

I can ... Because you're now on your own.

Yes.

But can you tell me about that.

Uh, yes the garden is a bit too much for me.

Mmm.

And I've thought of all sorts of ways of [sigh] changing that, you know, selling this house, building another one down on the bottom block; on the side, but oh [pause], we, we actually had a quote to make, some more bedrooms down under there. [Indicating under the house, which is on a steep slope.]

Mmm.

But it was, I think, too much then, and so it never got done.

Mmm.

So, I'm still here.

Yeah.

And I have checked up ... about going into [pause], [name of retirement village deleted].

Mmm.

[Clears throat.] *But I couldn't come at that.*

Mmm.

Because, being a nurse, [name deleted] has always been associated with [sigh] infectious diseases.

Mmm.

Ah and, having had a fair bit to do with the last polio epidemic, I couldn't come at that.

Mmm, so it's just the location. It wasn't anything to do with ...

Yes.

How it's been run or the design of it now?

No, no ...

Did you have a look at it?

Yes.

Mmm, and what did you, what did you think about it?

I think it's too institutionalised. [Clears throat.] The, the reason I thought of it was that it was in the, in the same, same location. Ah, but it was [sigh] it had too many memories for me.

Mmm.

Because it was an infectious diseases hospital.

Mmm.

And I thought, no I don't think so, but two of my friends are in there.

Mmm, and what do they say about it?

[Sigh.] *Ah, I actually haven't spoken to them.*

Mmm.

About it.

You haven't asked them? [Laughs.]

No. [Smiling.]

Oh, that's interesting, yeah.

Yeah.

But they sort of just ... They get out and about. They're ...

Yes, yes, yes, yes, mmm.

Yes, because I have spoken to one lady who lived there who was very disappointed. She actually came from Sydney.

Mmm.

Spent a lot of money.

Yes.

And wanted to get out because she said it wasn't as they said. She said, like there's a pool and gym and stuff, but they're never used. There's no social life, she said. And, but, but she'd lose a lot of money.

Yeah, yeah.

Getting out. I don't know what she did in the end.

Okay.

Mmm, because it's expensive to get in isn't it.

Yes, yes.

And there's expensive monthly charges as well.

Yes, yes, well I'm very attached to some of the furniture in this house.

Mmm.

And I [pause] don't think I could bear to part with it.

Mmm. So what are your favourites?

Ah well, see that dresser over there.

Mmm.

That's ah ... that's a very ... that's a favourite.

Mmm.

And this is a favourite because it used to be my parents' dining table.

Mmm.

Not that it looks terribly much there.

Mmm.

And there's a, a big cupboard in the spare room that I'm very fond of, and that desk. So I'm...

Yeah, you'd need, you'd need a bit of room.

I, I think so, yeah.

So the units there are fairly small are they?

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Because some places have bigger units.

Yeah.

Not many but some do.

No.

If you go to that sort of unit.

Mmm, mmm.

It's, it's a retirement villa unit really isn't it.

Yeah. And I have been down to an exercise class at [name of retirement village deleted]. Ah...

But they've got bigger ones there.

Yeah, but, but, it's run by the [name deleted] Church.

Oh. And so did you have a look at it too?

Oh well I went to a cl ... some classes there.

Mmm.

Some exercise classes.

And you talked to the residents?

No.

Mmm.

I just went to the classes. [Laughing.]

Oh you just yeah, I know you just went along as a group thing.

Yes,

Someone took the class.

That's right yes.

You did the exercises.

Yes.

So you had a, you were there on site. You know what, you know what the exercise group was like but that was about all.

Mmm.

Because I have spoken to someone too who, who new people who and apparently it is very expensive but you can have a large three bedroom unit with a big double garage.

Yeah, yeah. But it's very, very out of the way, [name of retirement village deleted].

Yeah.

It's, you know, it's between [name of suburb deleted] and [name of suburb deleted].

Mmm, it's very popular and in fact they seem to use that little shopping centre a lot.

Yeah.

And, the coffee shop there.

Yeah.

Yeah, and the eating places.

Oh.

I've, I've just observed that. [Laughs.] When I've been down there but ... but, well I've assumed that because I've seen a lot of older people, you know having a very pleasant time having a coffee.

Yeah.

At the, [name deleted] Bistro.

Well, that's... I'd say it's a bit of a walk from [name deleted] to the [name deleted]. Ah, the thing is, I used to live at [name of suburb deleted]. [She seems to have confused the bistro with another that has a similar name.]

Mmm.

Before the road went through; the new road. And I remember that [name deleted] with all its bends.

Mmm.

And ah, and feeling very queezy when I got out at the end, so I don't have good memories of that part of [name of suburb deleted].

So you don't have a wish to live...

No.

Oh, on that road.

No.

Mmm, yeah, ah so this is a thing ...

Yeah.

That determines your.

Yeah.

Housing choices.

Yes, yes.

One of the things is ...

Yes, yeah.

What that place means to you.

Yes.

Yeah.

And how close it is, to the facilities.

Mmm.

I haven't checked out. There's another place down in [name deleted] Street. I haven't checked that one out.

Oh, I don't know that one.

No.

No. Yeah, so you sort of, just take an interest really.

Yeah, yes.

Mmm, because ... Yeah, so what do you like about living here?

Ah, the view.

Mmm.

Mind you, when I first came here I looked out at the view the first night and thought, oh, this, it is lovely; and, I hardly notice it now.

Mmm, but you'd notice it if you didn't have it, I think.

Yes, I think so.

Yeah.

And it's very difficult, as you can see the windows are not very clean, and it's very difficult to clean them. You have to...

Mmm, from the outside.

Well you have to hang out the window.

Oh.

And clean it [laughs] and I'm not game to do that.

Mmm, you'd have to be pretty agile wouldn't you.

[Inaudible.] *And the trees are a problem. We had ... I had a tree went down over the power line and ...*

Mmm.

Cut the power off straight away.

Mmm.

And it was a while before I got it fixed.

Was that in that really big wind?

Yeah.

Mmm. I think I ... Mmm, did that go on any houses at all or ...?

No.

No.

No, it just went down [getting up to look out the window], down on the, on the, down onto the garden. You see.

Oh that.

Where it's been cut off.

Oh that ... That one.

Yeah.

Oh, oh, it doesn't look ... Or this one? No that one.

Oh well, actually it was a, another tree.

Oh.

That's been cut.

Oh it's broken.

It's broken down.

Those two. Yeah, because that Chinese elm will get big won't it.

Yes.

Yeah, I find that myself at my place, that the trees, if you don't ... They need to be managed. I'm more careful what trees I put in these days. [Laughs.] Well, more careful about putting any in at all, actually. Huh, I think shrubs are quite good for keeping the growth down.

[Laughs.]

Mmm.

Yeah.

Yeah, so, you find the house ... This area's easy to heat?

Ah, well it's not easy but, but I've worked on it. I've actually, have to confess I put up all this wallpaper.

Yes so, mmm, mmm.

And the, and the wallpaper in the hall; and the wall paper in the, lounge room.

Mmm. So when ...

With a friend's help.

So when did you do this?

Oh, years ago.

Mmm.

I think the wallpaper is actually holding this wall together.

Yeah, the latham plaster.

Mmm.

I've got that too, and you need it. I mean traditionally, they were papered.

Yeah.

And I think they really need to be papered.

Yeah.

But it's expensive to put it up.

Yeah.

So you spend most of your time in these two rooms?

Yes.

So this faces North?

Yes.

And this is the main room you heat?

Yes. Yes, I've got another lounge room.

Oh.

With a whole lot of furniture in it and a whole lot of [daughter's name deleted]'s stuff in it.

Oh.

And she's the one who's just had a new baby, so [coughs] I haven't be able to have my music club evening.

Oh, so you ...

No.

Oh.

Because it's all of her furniture.

So tell me about the music club.

Well we meet every month, the last Thursday in the month. The last Friday in the month. Sometimes it's a Saturday, and it's been going since, ooh, 1966, I think.

Mmm.

Sixty-seven ... Sixty-six, sixty-seven. When I was pregnant with [daughter's name deleted] and then I went into hospital for eight weeks with her, and it carried on, and we've got some new members. Ah, but a core of old members.

Mmm, and so you just get together and you listen to music?

Yes, yes.

And share new CDs.

Yep.

Mmm.

Mmm.

That's ... So it's not a ... It's just a voluntary sort of group.

Yeah.

Yeah, so how many are in it?

Well [sigh] it varies I think. We've had at the most 14.

Mmm.

But people have dropped out.

Mmm.

[Lowers voice.] *There's been the odd death.*

Mmm. So what's the age range of the group?

Well it started off, with eight and, and it's whittled down, down to ... We've got new members in, but the core members, there's me, and [name deleted], and the [surname deleted]s. No, no. [Name deleted] and me are the only two original members.

Mmm, mmm, but it's kept going.

Yeah.

Yeah that's one of the good things about being in the same place for so long although I suppose you grew up and went to school in Tassie.

Yeah.

Anyway, so you've got connections.

I actually came over from New Zealand when I was five.

Oh.

But, there's not many ah ... [Lowers voice.] *I haven't got many relations left over there.*

Mmm.

Yes, my father came over, on a university lectureship. That's him over there.

Oh, looks like Einstein.

Yes.

[Laughs.]

Yeah, and he, he was the lecturer in [name of course deleted].

Mmm.

And then after some years he was the master of [name deleted] Hall.

Ah, so you said [deleted]?

Yes, [name of course deleted], and he spent twelve months in [name of country deleted].

Mmm.

Ah, when my brother was two; my brother, [name deleted], was two.

Mmm.

And when he came home, and he told [name deleted] to go and do something, [name deleted] looked at him and said, no. [Laughs.]

Mmm, mmm.

So that caused quite a stir.

Mmm, mmm, mmm. Who are you, sort of thing. [Laughs.]

Yes, that's right, and [name deleted] unfortunately is no longer with us, [lowers voice] because he died.

Mmm, but he was here.

Yeah. He was born here, mmm.

So this group's mostly classical music?

Yes.

Yeah it is classical. Mmm, it's a very, very civilised thing to do. Mmm. So you must, you must know a lot about music, from having had all those years sharing and listening to music, mmm.

[Brings over some photos.] *That's my father and my mother and me and my sister and my brother, [name deleted].*

Mmm.

[Lowers voice.] [Name deleted]'s the one who's died.

Mmm.

I'm still here and my sister's still here.

So she's still here in Hobart?

Oh no, she's in [name of country deleted], mmm.

So she moved.

Yep. She went up there to do, to the Department of [name deleted] and then she married somebody.

Mmm.

And they went off to, gosh ... First they went to, uh, [name of place deleted]. No, first they went to [name of country deleted] and then to uh, [name of place deleted].

Mmm.

[Pause.]

So do you visit her often?

Oh, yes.

Does she come here?

Yes.

Mmm, mmm. [Pause.] Yes so, getting on to ... Back onto the house ... So you look after the fire yourself?

Mmm, yeah.

I mean do you ... Does anyone split the wood for you? Or ...

Yes, yes.

Mmm.

I have a friend who comes and splits the wood.

Oh, a friend, mmm, mmm.

A long standing friend.

Oh.

Mmm.

So you have a long standing male friend.

Yes.

But you don't cohabit?

No.

Mmm.

No, no. He has a wife and two sons.

Oh.

And, we get together for ... I sometimes go over there for dinner.

Oh, yeah so it's a family of friends.

Yes.

It's not like a boyfriend.

No.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

And do you find that it's, that this is an economical form of heating? Like it ...

Ah, that, that, that actually is quite efficient.

Mmm.

When it's on.

Mmm. Is that a Lopi?

[Looks.] *It's an Osburn.*

Oh yeah, so it's a slow combustion?

Slow combustion, yeah; and I have an open fire in the other room.

Mmm.

Which [pause] ah, I won't show you.

Because it's full of furniture, mmm. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

At the moment.

[Laughs.] Yes.

[Laughs.] So can you tell me some other things that you like about living here?

Ah, the fact that you can walk anywhere. Ah, mind you, it's mainly up hill, up here, so walking down is not so bad.

Mmm.

Walking back up is a bit of a headache. Ah, but that fact that you get the sun as soon as it comes up and ah, so ... The warmth I think, mmm.

And what about the sort of services? I don't know what services you use yourself but because you said you wanted to be near services. I mean, but where you go to the doctor or the chemist or for shopping, or ...

That's, that's a headache.

Mmm.

Because it's up the hill. Ah, if I go down the hill then I've got to walk back up again.

And do you drive?

I used to.

Oh, you don't drive now?

No. When I had the sub-arachnoid haemorrhage, they sold the car.

Oh, your family.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Because they didn't think I'd drive again.

Oh right, yeah.

Mmm, and I haven't.

Mmm, so you haven't pushed it.

No.

You haven't tried to get a licence?

No, no.

Yeah, so I don't know about the sub-arachnoid haemorrhage? [Laughs.]

It's in the brain.

Yeah, yeah. That sounds serious.

I've got this great scar across here.

Oh so they had to ... They had to let the blood out?

Yeah.

Mmm, well you were very lucky.

Yeah.

Mmm, you must have had good treatment.

Yes, I did.

Mmm.

Yes, I thought ... I was quite convinced I'd had a pacing wire put in to my heart, but I got, I got this [gets out a notebook], this written by my son.

Mmm.

[Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

I'll read it out to you. [Clears throat.] "[Name deleted], This is what happened, eleven o'clock, third of November 2002 you rang Paul and told him to come over to your house. You had a very severe headache with vomiting. We went to the Royal by ambulance. A CT reveal ... revealed a sub-arachnoid haemorrhage. You had an anterior communicating artery clipped. You don't remember this. [Here's the end to this note.] You have been in [name of ward deleted] at [name of hospital deleted]

ever since, rehabilitating. [Laughs.] You haven't got a pacemaker and haven't any problems with pacemaker leads coming out of your wrist."

[Laughs.] Heh, heh, heh. So you had some thought about that at the time.

Yeah, well I thought I'd had a pacemaker because ... And I thought that it was coming out at my wrist.

Mmm.

But it was actually an arterial line.

Mmm, mmm.

So, they wrote this out.

Mmm. Ah.

That was in 2002.

So how long did it take you to get over that?

Well, as I said, I was quite sure I'd had a pacing wire put in because I could remember this coming out of my wrist.

Mmm.

And that was only an arterial line, mmm.

Yeah, but have you found it ... You know, how have you been since then?

Oh! [Pause.] When I ...

Do you feel you've recovered well?

No, when I came to, I didn't know who was still alive and who was, who was, who was dead.

So if someone had died, you'd forgotten they'd died?

I knew my mother had died.

Mmm.

But I didn't know whether my father was still alive.

Mmm.

But of course, he wasn't.

Mmm.

And that was a very, very weird experience.

Mmm, yeah, your brain just took a bit of time to recover, yeah, from the, the ...

Yeah.

To heal basically.

And it's, and it's coming back. I can remember things from a long time ago. For instance I, I can remember playing with a little redheaded boy in [name of city in New Zealand deleted].

Mmm.

Before I left [name of city in New Zealand deleted]..

Mmm.

And I've had a few helpful friends around.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Yeah, so but your rec... So things, you don't remember things so well now?

No.

No, but you remember the past well?

Yes, yes, yes.

Mmm.

Yes. Short term memory loss, I think that's called, mmm.

Mmm, but you remembered me.

Yes, I did.

[Laughs.]

But I couldn't remember your name.

Jan. [Laughs.] And I thought yours was [name deleted] and I was right. [Laughs.]

Yes.

I wasn't 100 percent sure. So, yeah, you find the yard hard to look after. What about the house itself?

Well [sighing] ah ...

It seems comfortable enough. [Pause.] Do you get any help looking after it?

I used to.

Oh, what you used to get a cleaning lady?

Yes, yes. Ah, I had a very nice lady called Mrs [name deleted] and I gather she's not too well herself.

Oh.

Apparently. And then I had a, a nice lady after her, called Mrs [name deleted] and I recently saw her on a television program and she's got arthritis; you know one of those programs on at half past six.

Mmm, yeah, those health programs.

Mmm, yeah, and then after that I gave it away. I thought, no, I, I'll manage. [Sigh.] Because I had four children and the, the eldest was ten when I had the fourth one, so I had four under ten.

Mmm.

I thought I needed a bit of help.

Oh. Oh, so it's a long time since you had it?

Mmm.

Mmm, mmm, but you don't get any help at the moment?

No.

Yeah and so, you said when you first moved into this house, you were really pleased about the view.

Mmm.

But now you've been here a long time, and there must ... Yeah, you must have had different expectations from what the house was going to be like.

Mmm.

Compared to the experience of living in it all this time.

Mmm, mmm.

It must be ... So there are things about it that are worse than you thought they'd be?

Yes, yes, yes. Well those trees are a bit of a problem. Ah ...

And the power line I suppose.

Yes, yes, yes.

The fact that there's a hill and it's sort of lower than the trees.

And I had ... I had a white heart cherry tree and I had a raspberry patch, and all of that is overgrown.

Oh.

And I had, had an apricot tree and that's ah, had to be chopped down because it started to die. So...

There must be some disease. Mine is dying too.

Mmm.

Yeah, is there anything better than you expected when you moved in?

Yes, I haven't ever got sick of that view.

Mmm, well I'm not sick of it yet, heh. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

And what about your neighbours?

[Sigh.] *Ah, well they've changed. Ah, when I first moved in, there was a man next door called [name deleted], we called him, and he was, he was very nice, and then we've got some people next door now who are, who are a married couple and they have I think, two daughters, who don't live there. Ah, and I had at one stage on the other side, I had three generations. I had the elderly grandmother and the mother and the daughter and then my... While I was in hospital she sold that place.*

Mmm.

And she moved across the road, with a, a fellow across the road.

Mmm.

And so, there's a young family next door.

Mmm, mmm, yeah and so do you talk to your neighbours? I suppose, it's a big block. You probably wouldn't get to see them all that often.

I don't think the neighbours on this side like me very much.

Oh.

And I don't, I don't... I have a passing hullo with the neighbours on the other side.

Mmm. So do you feel you could go to the neighbours? You wouldn't go to them for help, you'd just ring your kids.

Yes.

Yeah, so which one of your kids would you ring? Well I mean you rang... Who did you ring when you had the ...

[Name deleted.]

[Name deleted.]. That's the eldest?

Yes.

Mmm.

Yes. He's the doctor.

Mmm yeah, so if you had a health problem you'd definitely ring [name deleted].

Yes, yes, yes.

And you'd get a very ...

That's right.

Quick and ...

Yes.

Yeah [laughs] and good response.

Yes.

Mmm, yeah. So in what ways do you think your housing situation here could be improved?

If you wanted to change anything to make it better for you to live here, what would you do?

I think I'd build a smaller, more convenient house on one corner.

Mmm.

And sell this one.

And so you'd subdivide the block?

Yeah.

Mmm.

But I haven't done it yet.

So you've got some thoughts now about the house design you'd like to have?

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah.

Mmm.

Yeah. So it'd be something similar to this I suppose. Would you have a sitting room off the kitchen that faced the sun, or ...

Yes.

And what, what else would you have?

I think I would have something like the house that my parents-in-law had at [name of suburb deleted], which is not there anymore.

Mmm.

They had a really big room with a sun room off that side and a dining room off that over there.

Mmm.

And then, sorry that's not good for the tape.

No go on, I can see what you're doing.

And then, and then you went, went through to the kitchen and the bedrooms were off down the hallway.

Mmm.

So it was a big family room with a dining area off it and a sun room off that.

Mmm.

I think I'd have something like that.

Mmm, so you'd have a lot of open living space towards the sun?

Yes, yes, yes.

Yes. Yeah, I saw a lovely design myself with a woman I interviewed last Friday and it was a house that was designed for a single person or a couple. It wasn't a family house.

Yes.

But it had a lovely big living room.

Yeah.

With a sun room off it. The kitchen off that.

Mmm.

Lovely big bedroom down the other end, and then it had a spare bedroom or study.

Mmm, mmm.

Round the back and the laundry, and, yeah it was just really lots of big windows facing the sun.

Mmm, mmm.

Yeah, it was a very unusual design. It wasn't the, you know, the regular house.

Yeah.

At all. Yeah, but, uh yeah, designs make a lot of difference.

They do.

Yeah, so.

Mind you uh, we lived in [name deleted] Street [name of suburb deleted] and that is the cold part of [name of suburb deleted].

Mmm.

[Phone rings.] *Excuse me.*

[Turns tape off.] [This was a daily call from her male friend, to check that she was okay. She told him she was being interviewed about her housing situation.]

You were talking about the kind of living area.

Yeah.

You'd like, but what other kinds of things do you think you'd in the place you built down on the corner?

Ah ...

I suppose for one thing, you'd want it sort of more level to the street?

Yes, I think so.

Would you have steps?

Ah, I think I'd have a ramp.

Mmm. Yeah because you'd need something.

Yeah.

Because there's still going to be a drop.

Yeah.

Yeah, yeah. Yeah and so, how do you normally travel around? Do you normally walk?

Yes.

Do you ever use the bus?

Ah, I have used the bus.

Mmm.

Yeah.

And what about ... Do you get lifts too?

Yes.

Yeah. So either with [name deleted] or with your kids?

Yes.

Mmm.

I have ah, two kids living up at [name of suburb past her house deleted]. Ah, [name of son deleted] is up there, and [name of daughter deleted] is up there.

Mmm.

With [name of grandson deleted]. She's number ... That's number [deleted]. And [other daughter's name deleted], ah, is in [name of city deleted] now. She was in [name of town deleted]. Ah, and [name of other son deleted] is in [name of city deleted], yeah.

Yeah.

[Name of son deleted] was working with Telecom or Telstra but he's... I'm not sure what he's doing right now, he's the only one who hasn't got a degree.

Oh.

Yeah, all the, the other three, have all got degrees, and [name of son deleted] I think just didn't want to do it

Mmm.

At the time. Not that he wasn't clever but he just didn't think he was, wanted to do it.

Yeah, not everyone chooses to.

No.

And so it's not much trouble for them coming past. So if you do need a lift somewhere.

Yeah, yes.

You can usually organise it with them.

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Have you thought about like in the ... If you did build down there, what sort of bathroom you'd have or ...

Uh, I'd have a convenient bathroom.

Mmm.

Possibly not a bath. [Lowers voice.] Although on the other hand I do like a bath. So I, I don't know.

Mmm. I think that's a dilemma for a lot of older people.

Yeah.

Because some people get to the point where they can't get in and out.

Yeah.

And if you have the shower over the bath that can become a problem.

I, I don't think I'll ever have the shower over the bath. The shower I have got, is very convenient, because you, you walk straight into it. [Sigh.] Ah, the bath is also a nice deep bath. I, I recently had, had the bath resurfaced, actually.

Mmm. So it's an old cast iron bath and you had it re-enamelled.

It was yes, yes. Yes, nice and deep.

Mmm, so you've got a nice deep bath and a big roomy bathroom and a big roomy shower recess?

Yes, yes.

Mmm, because there's plenty of room in this house.

Yeah. And I did have the toilet in the bathroom and I now have a separate toilet, elsewhere.

Mmm.

Elsewhere.

Mmm.

Ah, I've taken a piece out of the spare room, for the bathroom.

Mmm.

For the toilet.

Yeah. Yeah, because if you've got visitors it can get awkward.

Yeah, yes.

Mmm. Yeah, so do you have people come to stay?

Oh, well I have had, yes

Mmm.

I had a lady and her daughter, came and stayed. And, she was actually ah, the house mistress at [name of school deleted], and interestingly enough, she was the sister of [name of son deleted]'s first wife.

Oh. Mmm, mmm.

The sister of [name of son deleted]'s first wife's mother.

[Laughs.]

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, but that wasn't by design.

No.

It was just one of those Hobart things. [Laughs.]

Yes. But... And she didn't stay there. Well she stayed there about nine months.

Stayed with you here!

Yeah.

Goodness me, that must have been hard.

Yes, it was.

Mmm, so ...

But, she was a very good cook.

Mmm.

And she was a very nice person.

Mmm. So how come she stayed.

Ah, that was a complicated thing. She has a ... She had a problem with her husband at the time.

Mmm.

And he was a, a real pain in the neck, and I have a, I have a book that she wrote. [Lowers voice.] That was a while ago now, [pause] I wouldn't know where to start.

Mmm. What the book was?

[Laughs.] *Yeah.*

Mmm. But that's unusual. Not many people have... I mean I don't know how she came to do that, to come and live with you. I mean did she just ask you? You knew her. She was a friend, or ...

Well, she was the sister of a friend. No, a sister of [name deleted]'s mother.

Oh, so that's how they asked you?

Yeah.

Yeah, mmm, mmm. Because they knew you had the room?

Yes, yes.

Mmm, mmm, mmm.

Ah, but that was a difficult time. Not that she wasn't a ... She was a really pleasant person.

Mmm.

But then she upped and went off with, her daughter ends up with a man and they went off down to [name of town deleted] I think.

Mmm.

Mmm.

Mmm. Yes so she just needed a bit of time to sort out her housing.

Yes.

Or her circumstances.

Yes, so I think that's all.

And so yeah, you've got no immediate plans to make any changes to your housing?

No.

And you're really not thinking of moving.

No.

You'd rather do what you can here.

Yeah, yeah.

And you have an idea of what it would cost? If you sell the house, you'd be able to cover it no problem wouldn't you. But there'd be that sort of ...

Yeah.

How would you manage that? So where would you live?

Yes, yes, yes.

Where would you live while it was being built.

And the trouble is I think my health problems have got in the way. I could have done this if I hadn't had breast cancer.

Mmm.

And then the sub-arachnoid haemorrhage on top of that has put things on the back burner a bit.

Mmm. So do you think that the haemorrhage was to do with the breast cancer, with the treatment you were getting, or the stress on your health?

I think it might have, probably played a part. I also worked in a x-ray area in, cardiology. Ah there we did angiograms. So it was all under x-ray.

Mmm.

So whether that played a part.

In the breast cancer?

I don't know. Yes. I don't know.

Yeah.

Whether that played a part.

Yeah, so can you just tell me a bit more about what growing older here in this house means to you.

Well when I first came here I thought it was terrible, but the view was wonderful.

Mmm.

So that was good.

You thought the house was terrible?

Yes...

In what way was it terrible?

Well it was so terribly inconvenient.

Mmm.

Ah, we didn't have enough bedrooms. [Sigh.] We only had two bedrooms, and we had four children.

So is this only a two bedroom house? Or three bedroom? Or ...

No two bedroom.

Two bedroom?

Yes.

So this is why the plan to put bedrooms downstairs?

Yes, yes, yes. Uh, we did ... We've got a verandah thing out the back ... out the front.

Mmm.

That was ... It was used as a bedroom for [name of son deleted] I think. And then we had a new baby in our room. I'm going back.

Mmm, all the rooms are big though aren't they.

Yes.

That makes what makes it manageable I suppose.

Mmm, yeah. I'm trying to think of the sequence of events.

Mmm, yeah. As, as far as growing older in this house is...

Yes.

Yeah.

Yes, I've... We've been here what, 30, 30 something years.

Yeah, you said 35 before.

Yeah, yeah.

Mmm, yeah so what do you ... So starting from now.

Yes.

Or from recent years, now that you are older and, you know, and you're on your own here.

Yes.

So, what does it mean to you now being here in this house? As you're growing older.

I think it's a very nice spot here. You get the sun as soon as it comes up, but it's still a rather drafty house; a rather ah, drafty and ...

It's got big high ceilings.

Yes, yes.

Yes.

And that's where the water leaked.

Oh yes.

And would you believe I wall-papered this with a friend.

Mmm.

And painted the ceiling.

Mmm, but it's all cracked since.

Yes, yeah.

Yeah, so that could do with someone. I don't know what they'd do with it. I mean there's different things they can do.

Yeah.

They can put plasterboard over it or they can just repair it again.

Yes, yes.

And it'll probably crack again, because it just does crack.

You see that, that was a hole. That was a, ah, I don't even remember. I think that was a hole.

Heh, some sharp object's been pushed up through it.

Yes. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.] Yeah, I don't know whether that would crack or not. Who knows.

Yes.

So do you find people treat you differently now that you're older? Or now that you've had your health problems, more to the point.

Ah, yes. There are lots of people I don't see anymore. Ah, mind you that has unexpected bonuses.

Mmm.

When we were first married we lived in a hospital flat.

Mmm.

And recently I went up to stay with ah, my sister-in-law; that's [name deleted], my brother-in-law's wife. And, my brother-in-law, he died. But I went up to stay with [name deleted].

So she's not your sister?

No, she's my sister-in-law.

Mmm.

And they had six children.

Mmm.

And they live up on a farm.

Mmm.

At [name deleted]. That's just beyond [name deleted]. And low and behold I slept in a room with my old furniture from [name of house deleted].

Mmm.

Because her aunt owned [name deleted].

So what's [name deleted]?

That was a house down opposite [name deleted].

Mmm.

Now been pulled down and it's got flats.

Oh, so you used to live down there?

Yes.

Oh, when you were a child?

No, when I was first married.

Mmm.

We lived at [name of house deleted], and [name deleted], [name deleted]'s aunt had owned [name of house deleted].

Mmm.

So the bedroom furniture; she, she got the bedroom furniture.

Mmm.

Does that make sense.

Somehow through a connection with your husband you were living in that house.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Uh ...

Ah, you didn't directly own the furniture, just so much as that was the furniture you used when you were there.

Yes.

And it had a meaning for you; that it was nice old furniture you liked that was all familiar.

Mmm, mmm.

How long were you there?

Ah, at [name of house deleted]?

Mmm.

Two years.

Mmm, and so the furniture moved up to [name deleted].

Yeah. No, no. It started off at [name deleted].

Oh, and it went back there?

Ah, yes. It went ... No, it started off at [name of house deleted].

Mmm.

Because my sister-in-law ... My sister-in-law, sister-in-law's aunt owned it.

Mmm.

And it went to [sister-in-law's name deleted] when she died.

Mmm. Mmm. Yeah so we were asking ... You know, you said that was a nice thing that happened, that you went to stay with her and ...

It was.

So that was a nice thing that happened now that you're older that you mightn't have been able to do before?

Actually we went up there and stayed a lot when [name of ex-husband deleted] and I were first married, and we stayed in their little old house with our six children.

Mmm.

And we had good fun.

Mmm. And so did those people treat you ...

Yeah.

Did they treat you differently or the same?

[Pause.] *No they treat me the same. Of course there are people I don't see anymore.*

Mmm, yeah, so this is the main difference?

Yeah.

So they, to them you've changed and, you're not the same friend.

Mmm, that's right, yeah.

But your music group goes on.

Yes, yes; [sigh] with a few changes and, I told you I think we went overseas to get [husband's name deleted], [name of professional association deleted]. That's my husband's ...

[Name of professional association deleted.]

[Name of professional association deleted.] We had to go over to England to do that and we stayed at Oxford for that time when he got his [name of membership of professional association deleted]. And now he's retired.

Mmm, and so when ... I don't know at what point that you separated and he stopped living here; ah, like what ages the children were, for example. What age was the youngest then? You've been on your own here for a long time haven't you?

Mmm. [Eldest son's name deleted] was ah, fourteen.

Oh right. So the youngest was about four?

I think he was seven.

Oh right. And, did you find that you didn't ... That your friends changed then.

Mmm.

And you found then it was more difficult I suppose to manage the ...

Mmm.

I mean did he provide you with good support for the children, or?

Ah, no, not really.

Mmm. It seems to be a common story for women.

Yeah.

That men who've left.

Yeah.

Don't feel a responsibility.

No.

To support the children.

No.

And they do that as little as they can, or not at all, mmm, yeah, so that, so was that, yep,
mmm ...

[Sounds of moving around. Rest of tape silent.]

APPENDIX 3:

TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH WORKERS

Workers' words are in *Italics*.

Interviewer's words are in regular case.

Deletions and comments are in square brackets, in regular case.

Key to workers

	Gender	Area of work	Role	Page
Worker 1	Female	State Housing Authority	Operational policy manager	3
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Worker 1

Firstly, I'd like to take down some details about your work background, such as any previous training you may have had and the length of time you have been working in this area.

Training in terms of qualifications?

Well yes, for this job.

Well my qualifications for this job, which is why I applied for it because I thought it was relevant, well for working in Housing; I've got a bachelor of arts with a double major in Sociology and a Masters of Social Science in Social Research. I've worked in Housing for approximately ten years, in various roles in the policy planning, performance management kind of area; and at the moment I'm manager of operational policy and partnerships, which is the nuts and bolts policy for delivering public rental housing. And that also looks after the client review, client feedback area and also, it looks after partnerships with local government and broadly other parts of government, so things like Tas Fire Service and partnership with Police, if we ever get around to doing it and that kind of thing. Yeah.

What are the key policy objectives of your organisation in relation to housing provision for older people?

Key policy objectives? I think it's about providing access to affordable housing for people on low incomes and I think, in an equitable way.

What do you regard as the most pressing issues in relation to older people's housing at the present time?

I think it's access to affordable appropriate housing and that what's available in the market isn't necessarily what that group needs and I guess it's affordability in the private market and people, the issues that have been around for a long time. I imagine that people have access to home ownership at some point in their lives and are stuck in a house that they can't necessarily sell that doesn't necessarily suit their needs any more or if they sold it, it wouldn't give them enough equity to buy what they need to suit ageing in place, so for example selling the house that you purchased in 1950 in Mayfield wouldn't give you anywhere near enough money to purchase a, you know, unit in a retirement village or something, you know. And I think the main issues for Housing Tasmania are about equipping our staff for dealing with people with increased complexity and responding to their needs and linking people with service providers and people who can support them, rather than Housing Tasmania people necessarily providing support but to link people with people who can.

So you're saying there is a role for these people who are homeowners and who have unsuitable housing, but not necessarily through access to public housing.

What's our role in that? I think there are things like the Affordable Housing Strategy initiatives about maintenance and modifications and the kind of pilot thing they're proposing there and the kind of home maintenance thing they're proposing as part of that strategy. I think that those sorts of things and yeah, I guess, you know this Jan we've looked at stuff like the shared equity stuff and things in the past and it's just very, very difficult isn't it [laughs] to come up with a model that actually works and is financially viable.

Yeah ... What are the key housing needs of older people, bearing in mind the needs of single older women in particular?

What do they want from their housing? Oh I think it's safety, and security and stability, and I think a lot of older people would just like to stay where they are that's the impression I get from the Housing Review Committee cases

that we look at, people who clearly can't stay where they are because the houses just don't suit them and we might offer them somewhere like moving from, again I'll take the Mayfield house example, to some new Get Smart thing, but they don't want to move. They've lived in the house for 40, 50 years and raised their family there and they just don't want to move. So, stability. Being able to stay in the communities where they've lived, where their support structures are perhaps, and yeah but in I think in housing that they can live in without rattling around, without not being able to maintain it.

Yeah I think it's been a problem for a lot of people.

Yeah.

What do older people in general, and single older women in particular, want from their housing?

I think increasingly if people are prepared to move then the new models of housing that we're developing you know the Get Smart Homes, and the adaptable units suit them very well, but people need to be prepared to move and it might take a little while to get into one of those units but I think it will happen if they actually put their hand up to do it. But yeah I think with those models, are pretty good but you know ...

Yeah, but for a lot of people it's a big adjustment.

Yeah. It's a huge adjustment. And whether we're actually able to locate those types of units in the communities that those people might be moving from you know so ...

So they don't have to move very far

Yeah. If they've lived all of their life in Chigwell do we actually have a Get Smart unit in Chigwell that they could move into.

And if they want to live in congregate housing with other older people, we know already that it's very hard to get the land in those areas.

Yeah, yeah and if that's what people want, yeah. I don't know that everyone wants to live with other people who are like them.

No. Yeah.

Some people like diverse, some people like the cheerful bright young people who live next door and who are entertaining you know [laughs].

Yes. So my interest is in different models and it doesn't necessarily mean segregated models.

No. No. And I think some of the unit complex type things we've built in the past just because of the level of density, just creates problems with people getting along with one another.

Yeah. If they're too different.

I mean not everyone wants to live in someone else's back pocket you know.

That's a valid point. How well does current housing provision cater for older people's needs, and in particular for the needs of single older women?

Well I think it's, repeating myself, but I think it's housing that's located in communities that they're familiar with and have enjoyed living their lives in, so it's transitional, you know, but ...

Could you tell me a bit more about that then, about how you think it can be provided in a way that is transitional.

Well for example, Mayfield again, taking, using some of the vacant blocks of land that are there or you know demolishing some of the older houses and using those blocks to build things like the Get Smart Homes on them, so that people can at least make the transition from living around the corner to moving into one of these units. So that, you know, they can still potter around the block and catch up with the, you know, the links and friends they've made in an area.

Yes, so what do you think are the main things an older person is looking for in their housing. Say they've already decided to move, so what do you think are the sort of things that they need to be considering? Features of the housing and layout, you know, besides the location?

OK. [Pause.] *What people would like and we can practically provide I think are probably different. I think a lot of older people would like to have things like a second bedroom. Grand kids could come and stay in or that they could use for a carer or that they could put their life's worth of furniture and possessions into, but I think that's a difficult thing to practically provide.*

With the current policies we have about bedrooms

Yeah. Yeah. And things like, you know, some of our stock built for older people is very old and very tired and very small bed sit type. I can imagine and you know if you applied that bedroom entitlements policy strictly then you could end up with, you know a couple living in one of those units and I just I can imagine what that is like. I mean bedroom entitlements is something we are looking to review at the moment so that's ... You can't provide the Taj Mahal I guess, and it's a question of equity in a way. I mean because of like you know income based rent stuff, you can have someone on the same income say paying the same amount of tenant contribution, someone living in one of our new flash Get Smart Units and someone around the corner living in an old bed sit, you know.

So from what you're saying there's a mismatch in the current system between what old people probably want and what would be the standard of housing for them.

Yep. I think the way that we're heading is that the adaptable units and the Get Smart stuff is much, much, much better.

So when you talk about reviewing the things like the bedroom eligibility whatever, I mean how do you think housing provision could be improved to make it better meet the needs of older people, particularly single older women?

Well there's things like that policy and ...

Changing that policy?

Mmm. Yep but it's a limited resource with limited money to ...

Public housing?

Yeah, yeah ... to change it all.

So a line has to be drawn somewhere.

Yeah.

We already have a certain profile of stock and there's not much we can do with it.

Yeah. It's changing slowly over time, heading in the right direction but it's going to take a while to get there.

So what key changes can you see happening in older people's housing in the future?

Well more of that adaptable kind of stock and redevelopment of some of the older style elderly persons units. I mean a lot of those elderly persons units. I mean a lot of those units aren't occupied by elderly people any more. I know that's not the right PC language. They're occupied by other people with complex needs; a range of people with complex needs, so redevelopment of those and, where do I see it going. Well I think the types of things that they're doing with the Affordable Housing Strategy, the home maintenance renovation stuff, is well worth looking into and I guess what they've got in the current strategy will be a bit of a pilot to see how it goes and they'll evaluate it.

Yes it's a growing need so

Mmm. Mmm. Yep and how do you determine who you're going to do that for, yeah.

And it means drawing the line again

Yeah and I think there must be ways of supporting people to live in the private rental market more easily. I mean the whole rigmarole about getting into a house in the private rental market you know, acting quickly on what you see in the paper and you know, driving around to see all the, see properties and whether there's actually anything in that market at all that's actually suitable for older people and you know whether they can compete with the 20 other people who are lining up to get the same place [laughs], you know.

So they might already be disadvantaged.

Yup. I mean it doesn't seem to me, there's a pretty blurring line between the private rental market and what people do in purchasing a unit in a retirement village for example you know, they're essentially renting off, renting off the developer in those models.

Yeah but I suppose in the retirement village they're getting certain services, possibly with a charge, but there'd be more services available.

Yep, yep, yeah but I just worry about how much disposable income people end up with in some of those things. Mmm.

Yeah.

I think a lot of what's gone into the private rental market, supports for low-income people, are very much aimed at the younger end of the market. I don't know. Are there ways that older people could be supported in that market better. I don't know.

I don't even know what research has been done on that.

No. I think there are a couple of AHURI papers on it actually. Yeah. Yup.

I must check that out. I mean it's an option.

Yep. You were there that day in Melbourne. Wasn't one of those papers about older people in the private rental market? Maybe it wasn't you. About a year ago down at Southgate. Oh that wasn't you. It was [name deleted]. An AHURI paper presented that day which I thought looked at that.

[Discussion deleted.]

And you know people just seem so hesitant to sell the properties they've got, because it well, if they realise a large amount of assets it precludes them from public rental housing unless they gift those assets away which I really, really have a problem with so, you know someone sells the family home for \$350,000 and gives that money away to a son or daughter and then applies for public housing. I think we need to tighten things up so that sort of thing can't happen.

[Discussion deleted.]

Yep, but then I just think there's this sort of cultural thing in Australia about inheritance and I've got to leave something for the kids, you know.

Yeah.

Whereas I think some people have just got to, I don't know, I think you've got to be more selfish, if selling your house allows you to purchase into a retirement village that suits you better, but some people just aren't prepared to take that step because they want to, I don't know, live in misery for 25 years in a house that doesn't suit them because they want to leave something to the kids, you know. It's really sad.

Yeah. I think you're right when you say there's something cultural there.

Yeah

Just like there's something cultural about home ownership and they're probably related.

Yeah but then you know for young people the only way some of them are going to access the private property market, the home ownership market, is because Mum and Dad have left the property

Or have given them the deposit.

Yeah. Yep.

So you can't separate them out. They're linked. What happens with other people's housing or the decisions they make, are factors that influence or are influenced by the housing situations of their children.

Yeah. Yep. And you know Mum and Dad who sat on a house for 20 years and the moment they die the kids sell it anyway. So, yeah.

Yeah, so you can't say that sentiment doesn't count.

No. Yep.

What key changes can you see happening in older people's housing in the future?

I think increasingly there is a real need for kind of the role that the housing support co-coordinators are going to play, those four people, about supporting [name of organisation deleted] staff in their role and where they come across complex situations, how to deal with them. Yeah. But that's a whole lot of different types of complexity.

So can you think of an example that might be relevant to my topic, of a complex situation they might deal with?

Oh you know, linking an older person with HACC for example or you know, a situation I had described to me the other day was an older person who's got dementia, who you know had two children pulling in opposite directions

about what should happen to their mother and who the legal tenant is and who they should be dealing with and who can actually give permission for what to happen, and dealing with a situation like that for someone who took on a job 25 years ago thinking they'd be collecting the rent, is really difficult. So, and that's a really big shift in people about how they can deal with that and who they can bring into the picture to help them sort it all out.

So I suppose it's one of the things that can happen when a person is ageing and those sort of things can come up, and there are often a lot of emotions attached to it and ...

Transitioning from public housing to somewhere else where ever that somewhere else may be, you know.

Do you mean like a hostel or nursing home?

Yeah. Yep. Yep. Yeah.

But people in those situations they'd get advice from the ACAT team wouldn't they?

Yeah. That's the type of links.

So I don't think we are in the type of situation now that we were in the past where older people ended up in nursing homes when they didn't really want to.

No.

Now there's a process in place. As far as that goes while it's hard, a lot of older people not managing in independent housing, it is one of the other options.

Yep. Yes exactly.

[Conversation about who else to interview deleted.]

Yeah because it's more public housing focused really ...

I just think there's so much that we could do, so much that we could look at, so few people to do the work and so little money to, to put in place whatever it is we come up with.

Unless you find a way to tap into the assets that people do have.

Or you know, public private partnerships.

Yeah, so that private industry gets a return.

I would have thought it was pretty easy money really. And those Village Life people must have thought it was good profits.

Yeah

You can transition one tenant and the next, because you've always got a huge long line of people to take up the next place. Yeah. I've never understood why the Abbeyfield stuff never worked really well though.

I think it was partly cultural because well I've seen the people who end up there. If it meets their needs they're happy with it. But from the evaluations that were done it's more likely frail women in their eighties who seem to do well there and like it and benefit from it, so if you're younger and more active people seem to want more privacy and independence and space of their own.

So people have to select people carefully I guess, or people have to self select carefully to make sure it's really going to work for them. Where do they go if it doesn't work?

Yeah and that's another thing that's an issue they do have, that it's not inclusive because they've got to select their tenants carefully. And if you're a little bit irascible and difficult to get on with, as a lot of people are, especially so when they get older, they don't work well in Abbeyfield.

As I said not everyone like's living on top of each other. They like space.

In the interviews with the women I've heard that very strongly that most of them are averse to any sort of congregate living.

It's an introvert extravert thing. I imagine it would be a very easy place to live if you were an extravert and really social, but if you're someone who just needs time alone to reflect on the universe well it could be, I don't know, I couldn't do it.

Yeah. Yeah.

What your small talk threshold is you know? How many times can you ...

talk about somebody else's grand children or look at their doll collection.

It's communities of interest, like I could move into a shared arrangement like that if it was with people who had an interest in the things I'm interested in, talked about theatre and music and sang around the piano, you know.

People in cohousing talk about that sort of thing being very positive

Yeah. It [theatre and music] interests me more than housing you know anyway.

No. I think that was a good point.

Worker 2

Firstly, I'd like to take down some details about your work background, such as any previous training you may have had and the length of time you have been working in this area.

Ok. Does this area mean a policy area or a research area?

Well I'd say a policy area?

Not housing, but anything?

Well housing is the most relevant area so, but I understand you have a policy background that would enable you to have an understanding of or involvement in housing issues prior to your working here.

Yeah. Yeah. Well strictly speaking I suppose in the housing area I started in March and really it's from March this year that I started to acquire housing knowledge, before that specifically it would be fairly low. Prior to that, I suppose in policy work or research to support policy, which would be more accurate to describe my background. In 1997 we started the health and well being outcomes and from then on we were doing a lot of research into quality of life and well being and what were the social conditions that produced health and well being and that was about people's living environment which included their home environment, their working environment, their leisure environment as well as their physical environment as well, so and it was looking at social and economic, in fact it was social, environmental and economic determinants of health and well being, so a very interesting sort of area.

And there were some relevant findings on older people.

In our Health Communities Survey to our surprise, because we didn't really have a housing focus in it, but we asked people about what were the things that were important to them and how satisfied were they in them and we found that people's quality of life improved with, the sooner the better. If they were satisfied with their housing and the sort of measures of the satisfaction were not only the amenity of the house but how they could use it as a base, access to transport and those sorts of things and it came out quite strongly in the quality of life stuff.

What are the key policy objectives of your organisation in relation to housing provision for older people?

For older people? Beyond youth I may misrepresent the thinking up here but I get a very strong sense that the policy objectives are about improving and expanding the social housing but especially the affordable housing system and some of the target groups that are the focus there are single people and they can be older people or younger people so there is not a specific focus on older people, so single people and couples with children and people on statutory incomes and indigenous people. So it doesn't appear to me to be a strong focus on older people per se. Now I might be wrong there but that's the sort of feel that I get.

What do you regard as the most pressing issues in relation to older people's housing at the present time?

I think some of the really difficult issues for a lot of older people is perhaps a lot of people tend to own their own homes much more often but not always. If they do depending on where they live they may be able to get a big windfall from the capital gains on their houses but not necessarily, and they may be in areas perhaps rural areas where if they sold their house they couldn't buy even a smaller place or unit in a place that was better located for their needs. So they've got a capital asset but it's not necessarily sufficient to cover their future accommodation

needs, and they don't have the earning capacity and older people especially in Tasmania I think, they haven't had the incomes to acquire other sorts of assets, shares and all those sorts of things or big a superannuation table or all those sorts of things that would give them enough economic resources which they could put with their asset to get into better accommodation. I think that's a real serious problem for Tasmanian older people. Older women I say in that position would be much worse off. Most I would imagine have not worked for very long or at all and if they've got a capital asset it's been by a marriage and perhaps their husband has passed away or maybe they're retired, I don't know what the rules are on the superannuation now but I know it used to be the case that if the husband died she only got a portion of it. So even if they went without the income while he was working she's not, and I think it's institutional theft is myself, I'm not sure about the rules or whether that still applies but economically I think that women are in more serious a problem; if their present housing doesn't suit their needs their ability to finance different types of housing I think would be very low.

Yes. What are the key housing needs of older people, bearing in mind the needs of single older women in particular?

I think for quality of life, looking at the quality of life of older people being near family or friends being near services where it's not so difficult to access simple services like paying your bills as well as more important ones like health services and that sort of stuff. That would be an issue for older women. They may not drive. Men probably drive but older women may not drive. My mother doesn't drive.

Neither does mine.

And if you don't have access to decent transport your locality may be very nice for you but your ability to move around is very difficult, so I think for accommodation needs being able to access services, health services, ordinary types of services, education, I mean you can't get to adult ed courses unless you live fairly close to town. If you live way out then you know you can't participate, so your ability to participate if you haven't got good access to transport, if you don't live close, is actually quite difficult so the physical amenity of the house in terms of being able to keep it at a level of cleanliness that you want, keep it repaired if you don't have the access to buying those sorts of services security, doors and windows and that sort of stuff. Steps, they can get too much for you or become a danger in that you're likely to trip and fall down the damn things. Gardens can be too big. And if their locality is good that might be quite satisfactory but the physical house might be a problem.

What are the key housing needs of older people, bearing in mind the needs of single older women in particular?

Yeah. I would imagine that they would want to feel that it was affordable, that it was safe, that it was reasonably easy to heat, and reasonably cheap to heat. I think older people go without heating quite a lot. Or go to bed early, all those sorts of things because they can't heat the place or only heat one room. What was the question again?

What are the key housing needs of older people, bearing in mind the needs of single older women in particular?

Yes so affordable, safe, perhaps somewhere where that they feel comfortable bringing their friends so they can socialize or reciprocate. You know they won't go to people's places if they feel they can't invite people back, those sorts of things. I suppose there may be in some people's minds that they are living in a place that they feel is acceptable to their status as well. If they feel they are living in poor accommodation or a bed-sit or a very pokey little one-bedroom unit they might feel quite embarrassed about that kind of stuff. They may want to be able to use their housing as a base for participating or helping out their families, so another bedroom where people can stay or if they live in town and they've got their family living elsewhere that they can come and have holidays there, that they've got a school that sort of stuff, so the place is a bit more not just a place where they sleep but a place where they can have their families. They've got a few resources and they can do what a lot of parents like to do and help out. Yes, those inter-generational transfers; that were very often about minding the kids or having people over and that sort of stuff.

How well does current housing provision cater for older people's needs, and in particular for the needs of single older women?

Well I think it's difficult to change over the profile of stock quickly. I think so far, well after several decades we've catered for young families, so we've had the three bedroom houses and even in flat places we manage to have three bedroom houses with a whole bunch of stairs at the front and the back, so older people weren't really in mind. It was younger families. There seems to be a better focus now with units being built and the sorts of people who got funding from our CHP process quite a number of them were for older people so I think they're certainly on the radar and they're certainly being catered to but whether the amount of housing stock from public housing is enough or rising proportionally, well enough to keep up with demand. I'm not really sure. I doubt that it would be, and for women in particular I think there was a policy a while back of having one-bedroom places, which would be I suppose ok if people were sort of say sleeping and eating in their home and not having people over. And I don't think that'll cater too well for men but it certainly wouldn't for women.

It meets basic needs and that's about it.

Yes that's about it and you need to go another step further otherwise you start excluding people because they haven't got those social ... It's not a platform to live your social life, as well as your, you know sort of basic life, so and as for safety and other types of considerations I think the units are probably reasonable but I don't know enough to sort of give a really good answer on this.

Do you mean with public housing or the private sector?

Public housing; in the private sector I'm not sure if that's on with the focus at all because the private sector tends to go for profit. There are a lot of units being built and some of them are so expensive it's cheaper to buy a house than a unit and they seem to be for professional people, working people, high-income people so cars and all that sort of stuff are catered for.

They're marketing to people with the money.

I think so and that's going to be well, that's sort of in a sense blind to gender and blind to age but not blind to resources. If you've got the resources you're fine and well if you haven't you're stuffed.

Some wonderful quotable quotes there I think [laughs]. What sorts of housing works well for older people and for single older women in particular?

The mix in the neighbourhood, I think if you were going to cater well for older people and even older women in particular you'd have to be careful not to have very same sort of units. If you have a blob of units and they may be physically perfect and access to transport and all that sort of stuff. Everybody likes to live different types of lifestyles and some people are very, very sociable, some people are very, very private and I know from my research that you can develop configurations of houses or units or blocks of flats where some places are really quite communal in their focus and people would meet accidentally quite a lot and other areas a little bit more isolated. Now it may seem odd but some people like that level of privacy. They want to have other people at a bit more of a distance. They want to control their social environment a lot more, so if you could build places for older people you need to cater for the choices of lifestyle that people like to lead; highly social, and very unsocial, but really not so far that people are a little bit unsafe; variety. I mean just because someone's an older person doesn't mean that they're going to, you know, they stick to their knitting or smoking their pipe or that sort of stuff. I bush walk with someone who's nearly 70. I go to another club with someone who is 70, so people do all sorts of things, so it has to be sensitive to different types of lifestyles, different levels of activity, different levels of health of people. So you need varieties of options, and varieties of locations, that sort of stuff.

Which makes it harder to come up with a policy response that's going to ...

It does. Well it does and it doesn't because if it's not so specific, then you know if you're not looking for dead flat land next to buses that run every hour and that sort of stuff, you can actually make it a bit more flexible. So you can have some places in the Huon or down at Primrose sands or in Glenorchy, you know. Perhaps smaller clusters of places and perhaps that's easier for location-wise any way. And policies that are much more alive to the varieties of the way people like to live and the way they like to have their houses located and configured inside. Some people might be happy with a kitchenette and other people might want a proper kitchen where you can do some serious cooking.

Or a table where the family can sit around it.

That's right.

I've heard people say that about our elderly persons units, as they were called.

They're not social things. They're horrible. My father had a friend who was a bit older than him. He would have been approaching his 70s when I knew him and he lived in a bed-sit up at South Hobart with a whole bunch of steps down the front. You know it was ridiculous. But you know, bringing people over I mean he only had room for a couple of chairs and he was sitting on his bed.

You feel uncomfortable don't you, visiting. It's not the social norm.

Yeah. No it's not the social norm. It's not very civilised. Yeah. Mmm.

In what ways could current housing provision be improved so that it better meets older people's needs and the needs of single older women in particular?

When you have target groups that constantly reinforce things like young families, single people it's not quite enough to give all the nuances of how certain population groups like to live, so you actually I think need to name up that you are thinking about older single people or older couples, because then you think differently because otherwise you're thinking mainstream and then maybe people aged from thirty to fifty really.

And when you're talking couples you're talking two incomes or an income for two.

Yeah; or an income for two. That's right. Yeah so you need to name it up. Your thinking about these, and yes Tasmania has an issue with older people, but I think it also has an issue with poorer older people and given Tasmania's health and well being status which is in part you know something to do about lower socioeconomic status, so poorer older people and probably sicker as well; so poorer sicker, more likely to need all sorts of social and health services as well. Probably you would find it extremely difficult to buy those services and if you don't give them some sort of support people will become sicker and their issues more acute and they may distance themselves more from their families, because their families just can't take them on for all sorts of reasons, so you actually make life for some people very much worse. And given superannuation and those sorts of things, they're not going to be an aid for Tasmanian older people for a long time I don't think; especially to women.

What key changes can you see happening in older people's housing in the future?

I think perhaps one of the big things people living in a big house all their lives and I think in Australia but particularly in Tasmania people aren't going to live in the one house all their lives and some people have that often, and I can't include myself because I've moved in excess of 42 times in my life, 22 of them with my parents so we're a bunch of gypsies. [Laughs.] So we're used to it.

[Laughs] and a lot of people aren't.

It's true. Another thing we picked up in the healthy communities survey, the number of people who'd lived in their house for over 20 years and it's really quite high especially in older age groups. You've got to be older to be able to do that but nevertheless it's still pretty stunning.

So it would be interesting to know what that means to them, and what about that encourages them to stay.

When all their memories are in the one place and their neighbours are in the one place and they know it so well and they've accumulated an enormous amount of junk you know. [Laughs.]

And it's a cultural thing.

It is a cultural thing. You're not only are what you are but essentially what you own and all the knick-knacks and stuff.

There's a wonderful paper on the generation that are older now that it was all about the home and all the things that went to make the home and the role of the woman in the home.

That's right. Oh

And their attachment to all their things.

And some of those things take a lot of space. You can find that the book collection, like my mother and I have some of my father's stuff and all that sort of stuff. It's enormous. And you don't want to part with. I don't part with my Ian Rankin's so never mind serious books. So if you have people moving into different types of housing across their life cycle, when there's young singles and then married couples and married couples with kids and old people, it's quite disruptive in a sense. You can get used to it if you've moved a lot but some people might find that disruptive, particularly if they're having to move locations and so for older people now, moving around especially big moves, moving around could be quite unsettling and causing depression, all sorts of things. It could be quite serious for some and if you go the route of supporting people in their big three and four bedroom house well yeah, it can have some good sides but also have some bad, like you can't heat it, you can't look after it. It's a bit overwhelming and no form of security, issues like all these goodies and people constantly trying to steal them and if they go away on holidays they have all their stuff put in storage, which costs a bomb. All sorts of things.

So some people couldn't do those things.

No they couldn't do those things. They'd worry so they wouldn't go away, so it's really hard.

There's no answer at the moment and no one has the answer.

No.

For each person it's going to take personal decisions anyway about how they tackle it.

Well that's right and the inheritance thing of wanting to keep their place so they can hand it on to their kids.

Yes.

That's an important one for some people. And they won't move, they won't go into a nursing home or a hostel for instance and they want to hold onto these things and they don't want to go. A toughie.

Yeah it's another cultural thing.

It is.

I'm going to add a couple of questions ... What does growing older mean to you.

Well I've got a couple of key examples in my life. I mean my mother is a little old fashioned and to my way of thinking I think she's a very shy woman so she, she doesn't socialize a great deal so she doesn't mind being on her own but she doesn't view it that in way fact, she likes to control her own environment and she has all sorts of fun pottering away but I think sometimes it bugs her. She has got older and I can see all of the fear things and all the lowering and lowering of social contact and sort of narrowing of life. I mean she writes and she reads and she does all that stuff and that's lovely but I see that as not the sort of way I would like to grow old. Now I have other women friends who are, at least she was before she broke her leg, but she's a runner and belongs to a hash group and another is a bush walker and they've maintained their fitness and they've kept very active and being older to them means that they're wiser sometimes they have [laughs] less inhibitions and they just get on with life, they're not as fearful, they're just as sociable. They do new things, it's in a sense, it's terrific, because you don't have to go to work any more, which takes up an enormous amount of time and you can do all sorts of things with your life, get on with your art work or your weaving, all your interests. So I find that, that's terrific and that's the role model I'd like to follow but key to that is keeping your health and some of that's your own good management and some of it's luck, like bad arthritis in your feet or something and it's very hard to stay active. So getting older to me is not a problem because I can see people going out having a good time, smoking dope [laughs]; very active.

So you know older people who are having a good old age.

That's right. Not (a lifetime) of sickness. My father at 62 he died. But he died because he never really looked after his fitness. He got unlucky with a particular disease but if you do that you're probably making a hard road for yourself, which might be a little bit shorter. Mmm.

So how old is your mother then?

Seventy-two.

So you've got friends around 70. Do you know anyone in their mid 80es?

Mid-80s.

Yes. Do you have any thought about what it might be like at that stage of life?

No. No but I'll tell you what I did do. When I was at uni we did a research project and it was a thing called a correspondence analysis. Have you ever seen one of those? What I did was ... it's an exploratory method. Are you familiar with factor analysis?

Yes.

It's got the two dimensions. Well correspondence analysis has multiple dimensions and what you get is this big map and you have people and things about their life and their environment across it and what we found was that the 80 year olds and the sort of health conditions they had and their self assessed health status and the services they used were very close to the person. So they had to have help with dressing and doing that sort of stuff and some of them had multiple health conditions but they still said that they thought for their age that their health was good. People in their 70s were having more trouble. They used more services but they were a little more distant from them so the

gardening services and all that sort of stuff but they still did all their personal things they had less health conditions but were more pissed off with them but the 60 year olds were a bit more messy. You could see people with ill health and some that were quite healthy so they used less services and had less health conditions and rated their health as better so it was quite interesting, to see that. So for me my perception of people in their 80ies comes from, because I really don't know anyone of that age.

Yes because it might be about the need to adjust to older age.

Yes that clearly had. It was the 70 year olds who seemed to be having more the difficulty because they were experiencing more of a decline and the, you know irritation of illness or ailments.

Yeah but from what you're saying there's a lot more awareness about health now.

And that might change. It might be the 80 year olds saying bugger it now I've got all this stuff [health problems].
[Laughs.]

[Laughs.] And they'll be 90 before they adjust [laughs]. It's being predicted isn't it?

Yes that's right. And another thing and certainly it's not conclusive but that people who stay fitter stay active longer and then die. The chronic illness, sometimes if they're lucky enough they can miss out on that stage.

There's a term for that. Compression of mortality I think that's called, as people get healthier.

Yes. Yeah wouldn't that be nice.

Are there any questions I've not asked yet that you think I should have asked or any other people that you think I should talk to? If so, please tell me about them.

I don't think so.

It's been very interesting I must say [laughs]. You've given a good coherent picture.

Yeah well I suppose some of the things I've been involved in make you have a broad picture of systems and then of the detail within the systems because of my personal experiences with data analysis. I think that's about it.

Worker 3

Firstly, I'd like to take down some details about your work background, such as any previous training you may have had and the length of time you have been working in this area.

Ah. I've been in the aged care position, since '98, and apart from a couple of years when I first started in the Department I used to work in, I was in the Launceston Bank of Savings and the Tasmania Bank and I was for many years the lending manager for mortgages, so I had a lot to do with people's housing and particularly we had a lot of issues with older people being sold houses constantly. They'd sell because their family had grown up and they'd go into something small that didn't suit them and then they'd sell to go back to something big and it got to a stage where we had to have words to them and have words to real estate agents who were preying on them to a certain extent. So I've had an interest in it for a long time.

And qualifications, like formal training?

No.

What are the key policy objectives of your organisation in relation to housing provision for older people?

Well I suppose it's what's emerging, which is the real issue, but certainly for the frail aged, traditionally there was residential aged care and there was a number of options and levels of care provided within that, but the current Australian government is moving towards more of a user pays system and wants to split the accommodation component of aged care away from the care component, so that they say that accommodation is a private matter and they will fund the care only. The Hogan review, into residential aged care has recommended that they move to a voucher system where a client who has care needs will be given a voucher and then they have the choice of either having that care in their own home or having that care in a residential setting. And therefore the choice of where the care's given is theirs and therefore they pay for the accommodation component of that care and then of course one of the issues in that is that not all homes are suitable for the delivery of care. And when does the accommodation actually become part of delivering the care that the person needs when it's just a choice of the residence, where the user resides?

What do you regard as the most pressing issues in relation to older people's housing at the present time?

I think the incapacity of a lot of houses to suit clients needs as they become frailer; a number of years ago I read a research, which probably is 96 or 97, research on older people and their housing needs and I was interested to note that people even when they're 55 to 65 had a lot of fears about the environment they lived in; whether they'd be able to cope with maintaining the house they lived in and whether they'll need to move closer to health services or closer to family as they get older, so they were fearful of that future period when they wouldn't be so independent but when you, when the same survey of those who were 85 plus, they didn't care, they didn't care about all those things, which then would make it hard if they were then satisfied with where they were staying even if it wasn't suitable. It's then hard to move them out.

So they've adjusted their expectations downwards.

Mmm and I think Housing Tasmania had some issues, at one stage where people have grown up, lived in a Housing Tasmania stock and it's been through their, their family's grown up, they've left and Dad's died and Mum she's in a house where she's brought up her family with three bedrooms and she only needs a single or a two bedroom unit but her history and her life has been tied up in this three bedroom house that she really can't maintain and you know it would be good if there was a need to move people earlier or to encourage or offer options at a lot earlier stage so that

they are in appropriate housing when they get to that age where they don't care any more and what they've got will do them.

What are the key housing needs of older people, bearing in mind the needs of single older women in particular?

I think whatever housing it's got to develop a community, and there's various sorts of models there and we've seen with, Abbeyfield that it's a too intense community.

Mmm.

And, and that being by themselves is an isolation so there's a desire to actually have some sort of community that the models that seem to be around or that a lot of the models that seem to be around seem to be yeah, too controlling, too intrusive and having something where people can live, live independently but actually have that sense of community, ah, around them is, seems to be what's needed, I believe some of the things that I think, maybe we've got to develop more caravan parks where it's, there is a community spirit in a caravan park yet people are transient so they come and go and people can have a degree of independence, but how you develop that in a normal sort of residential setting is a big question I suppose.

Because they have things in the US, the trailer parks don't they? And I think there are a lot of those I think with older people living there.

What do you think? Talk to some of them?

More portable homes?

More, you don't get very old or very frail, but the younger kind of people who tour Australia and you know have made all these connections and when they're touring and they've just been traveling around slowly and spending a couple of days in various parts of the country as they've toured around ...

The "RV-ers" they call them in the US.

Mmm and they're just cruising around and they seem to, I've got in-laws who do the same thing, and they come back and they talk about you know, being cared for by people in caravan parks and there seems to be a sense of community because you're part of that lifestyle rather than, it's not the same when you're in your own home, in your own suburb.

Probably more isolating is what you're saying.

Mmm, because people, we have a culture of the moat, the green moat around our houses and you know you don't rock up and you don't say hullo and you don't offer assistance, unless you've got a close friend but in caravan parks you're sort of drifters and therefore you tend to give advice and chat.

Everyone knows that you have no support network I suppose, so you need to do something.

And I, I noticed in the past some, particularly women, in the winter months used to gang up like in a gang and they'd go to Queensland for a few months, in, in the summer months they'd go again as a gang, because as a group together their accommodation, because they could rent their accommodation because it'd be cheaper on a per person basis, they haven't got heating costs; meals are cheaper because they're still be eating salads and things like that, so they used to find it quite cost effective to go to Queensland for three months during the middle of Tasmania's winter, yet the same sort of I suppose community, isn't experienced when they're back here, so yeah, I suppose it's community expectations.

I suppose it'd make it attractive. So these are from stories that clients have told you.

And when I was in the bank, in those days you had to send a form up with somebody's signature on it up to a particular branch of a reciprocal bank so they could get their pension.

So you knew where they were?

And you knew the first few weeks of winter coming, you'd be doing the older suburbs, hundreds, hundreds and hundreds where they just fly to Queensland and live together.

Yes, so how do you tap into that kind of thing because I didn't know it happened? Yeah I think you'd have to know someone involved.

It's interesting and I sort of queried it and they said well actually it's cheaper here because of shared accommodation costs and no power bills or no large power bills for heating the home, and not having to put up with the cold weather.

Mmm. Yeah and that's been going on for some time?

Well I've been out of it for 15 years so.

It's fascinating because I didn't know about that.

What are the key housing needs of older people, bearing in mind the needs of single older women in particular?

I don't know what they want. I would guess that they'd want more security, that they want things that are low maintenance; that they know ... I know what they don't want, they don't want to have, it's more the fear factor and in reality it's fearful, fearful of not being able to maintain, fearful of actually spending their money now to enjoy because it might be a waste because they may not be here much longer, fearful of being taken advantage of by builders or trades people or some of them get very fearful of a change of neighbours, things that they're not used to not and I suppose in some areas where a suburb has been middle class, they've all been the same, they've all been young family people that have grown up moving into a new suburb and their family's left and the suburb's changed and the people coming in are, might have teenage children or young children and suddenly, the street was quiet, and now the street's full of kids and cars and they become fearful of those factors and I suppose they've got no one to turn to and it's not like when they were younger and had their own children who lived there and they knew people all up and down the street and now they don't know them any more. So they're gradually getting more and more and isolated in their own home as the world changes around them, so ...

How well does current housing provision cater for older people's needs, and in particular for the needs of single older women?

I don't think housing in general has advanced to any significant level. I know that Housing Tasmania's got the Affordable Housing and some models, they're developing housing that suits but, like design where the steps are minimized, where your doors are 1250 mls wide rather than 900 mls, so that if they ever need to have some sort of aid to move around the home the building can cope with it. So from a building aspect I think as a country we can move a lot more quickly by bringing in the designs so they actually suit an ageing population. I think that councils and part of the things we're trying to get in aged care with local councils is so that they actually have an older person scan, like an environmental scan but an older person scan over any development, so that when they're refurbishing their malls or doing their paths they're actually saying, is this going to be enough light for older people? Are the tiles that we're using suitable for older people, suitable for people with walking frames or walking aids, suitable for you know those little motorised buggies because in fact the current design of just the ramps from a footpath onto a road, across a road will tip over a three wheeler, because you actually have to go at them horizontally

or perpendicular to the road otherwise they tip over because it's all sloped down, so it might be designed for pushers and somebody wheeling something straight at it but it's not designed for somebody going up the road and wanting to cross across without actually backing back, so I know some disabled people who actually had to move to four-wheeled buggies because the design of the path can't cope with the three-wheeled buggy, so there's things like that. Certainly I think parking, now parking tends to get tighter and tighter yet, unless you can provide reasonable parking for an older person who's not or who finds it difficult to get into tight spots, then your supermarkets and your retail areas are becoming very restricted.

Because some of them are very hard to get into, the normal parking spots.

It's obviously part of something a bit wider of the accommodation, and there's very little I know in Launceston there's very little in the way of public toilets and very little in the way of rest rooms and you see programs where some cafes are asking people who just turn up to have a coffee to move on unless they're going to buy meals. They need to have common spaces that actually older people can meet and rest ...

Without having a lot of disposable income.

And where they can get their vehicles in, yeah.

Because there's more to housing than just a roof over your head.

Mmm. There's participation in the community, so there's that and establishing some kind of community and how that works and things like, we tend to focus with older people, on all people over 65, but we don't look at the birth from 40 as a single cohort and yet we tend to focus on older people as one cohort.

Yes [laughs] that's a great analogy.

And their needs as they go through from retirement right through, and we've got to look at separate groupings and then we tend to do things for older people that actually restricts their access to other services or mixing with younger people. An example of that is we run day centres, day centres for older people and they might sit and they might come along and they might have an activity but we spend a fortune to get them there and get them home and for staff to supervise them, yet there's some groups like, my father's a social worker in the [name of area deleted], and they developed a [name of social group deleted] which is done out of [name of city deleted]. It's done out of [name of church deleted], but there's a lot of different charity organisations running that program right throughout the state and for one day a week for two dollars it's craft and it's open to everybody. The only paid person is the childcare supervisor so they run a crèche with a qualified person there. All the crafts tutors give their own time free of charge and for two dollars you can get a cup of coffee and a biscuit. And they make money.

Mmm.

They can provide all the tables; provide all the chairs. If anybody doesn't have the money to do a craft they just pick it up the cost because they've got the money and they can say, well if you can't afford the material we can pay for it and ...

Out of the money for the coffee?

Out of the two dollars, but when you're getting two dollars and up at [name of city deleted] they're getting 120 people per week, so you're getting two dollars from a hundred and twenty people per week and the only expense is a donation to whoever you've got the hall from for a bit of power and paying a qualified childcare person for three hours work, but what they found is that because it's open to everyone typically it's older women and younger mothers who've got children who are still in that maternity leave period and who don't like to be housebound and it's an opportunity to come and go somewhere, have their children looked after and have some conversation with

people, do some crafts. And what my father-in-law found is that relationships are built up between people, so if somebody can't get there somebody else doing that same craft will say, well I'll pick you up.

So it's a sort of community.

And an old woman's worried about how she's going to get to a doctor's appointment. Doesn't know how she's going to do it. And the younger mums will say, well I'll pick you up and take you and so, the, it's not pushed. It's just natural because you're there, you've got something in common with a group of people and you're meeting regularly and, just that natural human community spirit comes out.

A bit of altruism or reciprocity, or something like that.

What sorts of housing works well for older people and for single older women in particular?

I don't know if there's any one particular model. I think that's the answer. There would be women, older women who have a great deal of connections with their community and they probably couldn't cope with living alone, so they tend to be in something that has a more of a community and those are the ones that Abbeyfields really suit.

The ones that can't get out any more?

Yes, but they just like company. They thrive on company and they've just got to have people around them. And then there's people who are very much loners and like being alone and something like an Abbeyfield complex would be horrendous for them but they do need to be knowing that somebody's got an eye on them and if they need help they've just got to ring a bell or there's somebody they can call on and that's where more of a village type setting, where they've got their individual little units. It was interesting in [name deleted] aged care facility built 27 independent living units around their aged care facility and they were all two bedroom units and they expected it would take about 12 months for them to be occupied and every single unit was sold off the plan before they were even started. And they just were surprised, all of their research sort of didn't show this up and when they did do research as to what was the demand, what was the driving force, but typically it was mum and dad and dad's ten years older than mum and dad's done everything and mum's been the homemaker and dad has recognised that he's going to die before mum and he'll set mum up. She was going to be right. And those two bedroom units were seen as being ideal, close to aged care. They liked that because if dad needed the old aged care mum'd be on site and she could go down and visit him and still keep her own independence. They were two bedroom so the grandchildren could come and stay and have friends over and visitors; and yet they were independent and if they didn't feel very well they could still go and buy meals from the aged care facility, so that was sort of seen as ideal. But I know that [name of retirement village deleted] which is in [name of city deleted], which is three-bedroom homes has just sold phenomenally. But this is groups that say we've got this three-bedroom house in this village and the fear of the long term is gone, because we're now near residential aged care but they can tour knowing that they don't have to worry about their house because the grounds are being looked after by the corporate body; it's to a degree a restricted access complex.

So people would know if a stranger was in there I guess.

Yeah and so that's, seems to advantage a couple of the aged care providers who have come over to the state saying that all of them want to, there's a demand for residential aged care, or a demand for retirement villages, independent living units. but they don't want now to be on the same campus as the aged care facility but they want them being provided by the same organisation as the aged care facility and that next block over or the next street, and this is all about the fact that they want to live in a retirement village. They don't want to be seen to be living in residential ...

Aged care.

Aged care facility, but they still want to have that security that they've got priority from the aged care provider.

But hasn't that changed now? I thought that it was no longer automatic.

Oh yeah. It's not automatic but at the end of the day, aged care providers can choose who they take and they take the one that is I suppose technically, as soon as you come into their retirement village, they treat you as though you're a client and it is our responsibility to care for you until you depart the planet and some will actually say that they give preference to their retirement villages and there's one in [name of city deleted] that's actually has a good name and a lot of people put their name down but very few people will actually leave the community to go into it because there is such a demand because they have so many in the independent living units that any vacancy that comes up in aged care there's a waiting list in the living units, people waiting to get into residential care.

So which one's that?

That's [name of nursing home deleted].

I've heard of [name of nursing home deleted].

And so, I think that's more likely, and that's a risk of the aged care industry moving ahead into the retirement villages, certainly meeting a need but it means that if they have that policy, people who stay out in the community will find it difficult, and therefore to get into residential aged care, you'll have to go through an independent living unit purchase.

Mmm. I hadn't seen it that way either. In what ways could current housing provision be improved so that it better meets older people's needs and the needs of single older women in particular?

I think from an immediate direction it is the case here, to be really flexible in models and allowing you know, putting some funding into initiatives that may or may not fail; and just seeing how it works and seeing just what comes up with and if there's a group of older women wanting to trial something, saying let's fund it and see how it works. In the long term I think the community has to acknowledge that our world by 2050 is going to be a large percentage of very frail older women and so we actually have to start putting the infrastructure and everything there now so we can care, so our environment is suitable to care for them. The ABS data suggests that a third of Tasmanians will be over 65 by 2050 and that the majority of those will be over 85, so unless there's big improvements in outcomes people are going to be very frail, a lot of very frail people and we haven't had a lot of OECD countries, as the life expectancy increases they actually see massive improvements in health outcomes. Australia and Canada and Britain haven't seen that, so as we see the life expectancy increase, the improvements aren't as consistent. So what we're seeing is the life expectancy increasing but the level of disability increasing as well.

And so do you know why that is? Have we identified some of the causes of the ...

Not being specific, I tend to suspect that it's a couple of things. One is that in some of the other countries, there have been massive improvements, you know big improvements in the life expectancy you know, because they've dealt with some serious health issues and so they're coming up to where Australia or Canada or Britain might have been. And I think the other thing is that our, our prosperity has given us poor health.

So you think disease from unhealthy diets?

Unhealthy diets, unhealthy living, driving.

Drinking too much.

All those sorts of things that we enjoy have poor consequences at the end of life. Just talking to someone today, one of the Commonwealth managers and he has started walking and he's got a pedometer. He says I'm down to 2300, to 400 steps a day. So they just walk out of their house and into their car, driving to work.

And you need to do 10,000 steps to maintain health, which I find hard [laughs].

And you know coming to work and working in your office and then walk home, or I wouldn't walk home from work, but drive home so we're just moving from one seat to another seat.

So perhaps there's something about the design of environments as well as making them more accessible is that they actually provide opportunities for walking or reasons to walk ... What does growing older mean to you personally.

I suppose I want to be a healthy older person, so I'm taking on board all the information except probably coffee drinking. I drink too much coffee, and I think what I haven't got my mind around and I think as a community we don't like talking about is, that none of us want to die but if we all got pushed I expect what you want to die from, I think you'd say old age. So my question is, what is dying from old age and once we determine what that is, then we can have policies to improve the way we die so we can actually, I noticed in one of the speeches of the chairman of the Productivity Commission making a comment that 20 years ago someone who was 75 and ended up in A and E with heart failure, wouldn't be treated at all. Would be left to die and now you wouldn't dare not treat them, but unless we actually come to terms with our increasing ageing population, come to terms with what actually is dying of old age and can have some sort of I think, quite comprehensive benchmarks and a lot of it will be, you know client's expectations. I mean someone wanting to wait for their grand daughter's wedding, then faceless people, us health people will be making the decisions in so called ethics committees about how we're treating people based on their age and age is not what we should be basing that ethics on. It's got to be a whole lot of criteria and about where our body's at in deteriorating, like I've heard ...

Like with smokers?

Well I wouldn't say smokers should go off but somebody, whose 85 fit, looked after themselves and, has got basic fitness

Good bone density.

All that sort of stuff.

Low cholesterol.

And has an acute episode that's life threatening and you know if you are aggressive in your treatment and they survive and they have three, four, five years of life left, active life left, well it's got to be of value. But if you've got somebody who's coming in diabetes, they're obese, they've smoked, they've got multiple health issues and signs that major body organs are failing and the come in with a life threatening acute episode.

It'd be almost cruel.

And you might fix them but then they might be in a residential aged care for six months or nine months before they die, until something else hits them, then that's, it's hard. We do it with cancer, say a person who's got multiple cancers in their old age and they're on pain killing drugs and all that, if they have a stroke or heart failure they don't do anything about it because what's the point. They're dying of cancer, and that's very clear but we haven't got it clear in other areas. Anyway I've heard a story, one of a person whose in his mid 70s with heart failure admitted to and A and E and they started talking to what they thought was the person's daughter, saying well he's had a good life and you know he's 75 or 76 now and, do you really want you know, us to be aggressive. You know we could put him into ICU but he mightn't get off the machines and then we've got to turn it off and they were talking like that. And it was actually a young wife who had an eleven-year-old son and she just said I don't want my son, my eleven-year-old son not to have a father. And the whole system changed instantly to treat that person aggressively because of that, and I think those are the sorts of statements in the middle of an A and E on which life and death decisions are being made on.

Yeah.

And then I know from a family member, they put a pacemaker in a 94 year old grandmother and she was developing dementia and so within two years of having a pacemaker put in she developed dementia to such an extent that she was in a foetal position in a nursing home, where she lay until she was 106, until the pacemaker gave out.

So the pacemaker was keeping her alive. Amazing.

And no communication.

So this is the point where there's a need to make a rational decision that it's not doing anyone any good.

So yeah the assessment could say well, yeah she's been sprightly but yes she's got this dementia it is been progressive or aggressive

So is that another reason to withhold treatment?

And so yes, you know, we've got to weigh this up and it's got to be more than just on a cost basis. It would be terrible if it was just on a cost basis.

So also on quality of life for the person and on the quality of life of the people looking after them.

And their families. There's lots of factors that need to be taken into account.

Are there any questions I've not asked you that I should have asked or any people you think I should talk to?

Not that I can think of.

So it's very interesting isn't it and it's good to talk to other people because everyone has a different view on the whole issue.

Well I always think we're spending an awful lot of time in self-management of chronic conditions and wanting to improve the health outcome in those chronic conditions but at the end of the day what are we going to die from, but we haven't talked about that and I think we need to otherwise without a good palliative care approach, and we understand palliative care in the context of cancers and we understand palliative care in the context of some major organ failures, but we don't understand palliative care to well in a process of just frail age.

There certainly are case studies of people trying to find what it is that's just a natural death of old age. They have studies of this because it can just be a peaceful death in your sleep.

And the Commonwealth have put out quite a good report on palliative approach to residential care and that has a lot of useful stuff, so the discussion is starting but I asked some of the senior directors of nursing and senior doctors in the Department what is dying of old age.

They can't tell you?

They can't tell me.

Some writers say it's when your heart gives out, so when the battery stops.

So, so from that discussion I read an article that was written by a doctor in Holland who said that once they've made euthanasia legal, they turn a blind eye to it, but once they made it legal the number of cases where the guidelines

were't followed increased phenomenally and they did research and a phenomenal amount, something like 70 percent of all economics and accounting students thought euthanasia was an appropriate policy to manage an ageing population.

It would be interesting to know the ages of the people wouldn't [laughs]?

Oh they were students. They were economic and accounting students. And they have residents of nursing homes walking around with "please revive me" because the assumption is that they won't be revived.

In Holland?

Yes in Holland. And there was care taken before it was made legal because there was a risk you'd be sued because it was always illegal to euthanase but just a blind eye by the government to it. And now it's legal so they can euthanase but it's really up to the system and the community to take people to court and try to prove that they didn't...

Consent

That it was an inappropriate euthanasia, which is a bit scary.

Yeah it would be. I think that's gotta be about it.

Worker 4

Firstly, I'd like to take down some details about your work background, such as any previous training you may have had and the length of time you have been working in this area.

I've been in Tasmania since 1989. I did a Diploma in Welfare Studies in Tasmania. I've worked in a number of SAAP services [names of services deleted]. I was the co-coordinator of [name of organisation deleted] in the mid nineties for eighteen months. I was on the management committee of [name of community housing organisation deleted] which is a small affordable housing association for young people and for the past five years I've been the manager of [name of community housing organisation deleted], which is a medium sized housing association which manages approximately one hundred and twenty public housing properties for [name of organisation deleted] and I also manage 30 units for older people which are owned by [name of organisation deleted].

Oh. I didn't know that. So I've learned about some more. What are the key policy objectives of your organisation in relation to housing provision for older people?

Oh to provide safe, secure affordable housing on a long term basis to people who are disadvantaged and I guess one of the aims is to make it sustainable, as the program doesn't receive recurrent funding.

What do you regard as the most pressing issues in relation to older people's housing at the present time?

I guess with the 30 units that we manage in relation to older people, they're concerned mainly on a day-to-day basis, I focus on the maintenance of security and safety issues but I guess on a wider, broader perspective there is a demand, a growing demand I think for accommodation generally but also for two bedroom accommodation because what we have are one bedroom units, that I've found in Tasmania over the last ten years there's been a change of people's expectations with regard to and maybe a change in their needs as well, that in the past where people were happy to have a bed sit or a one bedroom they want, they feel they require a two bedroom because they have the grand children coming to stay and family members coming to stay and a bit more I guess of mixing and matching of family units.

Mmm no doubt there's been changes ... What are the key housing needs of older people, bearing in mind the needs of single older women in particular?

As I've just said, it is, well I guess that I mean the more obvious point because the people that we house are on a government pension or benefit, that are they require affordable accommodation firstly and a lot of the accommodation options do require money up front whether it's by a bond, four weeks rent or with some of the more institutional based programs as opposed to the private rental market there's often a lump sum up front, not that it actually seems to provide any greater level or service or increased level of service, but there's usually up front fees to get into some of the accommodation run by charity or institutional organisations. So it's access to affordable accommodation that is a major issue. Then I suppose it's making sure that the accommodation is well maintained and secure because there is a lot of concern from the people who come into the program from the private sector instead of the public sector and from a lot of NGOs, they are concerned about tenure mix and whether, how they impact on their privacy and security and the complex we have is 30 units and they are quite, compact units and they're close together but we have a very strong focus on maintaining a good tenancy mix so that we are concerned how one allocation that can affect six people in a given way. We'd rather allocate properties in a very sensitive manner.

But that means cutting some people out doesn't it?

Oh it does but we have to be concerned about the greater good and maintaining the harmony in the complex, so allocation is the most important thing in that environment, sensitive allocation so that the person that goes in isn't set up to fail and the people who are there aren't going to have a negative impact on the new tenancy. So we try to sort of maintain and create harmonious conditions.

And where are the units?

[Information about the location of the units deleted.]

What do older people in general, and single older women in particular, want from their housing?

Yeah I guess the last question did because I mean I did focus on affordability whereas as far I mentioned sense of security with our tenants, I think what people want, I think most people renting a property they want a sense of security, they want to actually know that somebody at the end of the phone actually knows who they are and actually cares and is gonna treat them, treat them with some respect so they can get their needs met and in a timely fashion as well. I mean it can be small things but it can make a huge difference if someone has a concern about their power not being on or just changing light bulbs. If they feel that someone cares enough you know to drop in if they're out and about, just to see how they're going that makes a huge difference I think it's, it may not be achievable depending on the size or the scale of the operation but we find that we can do it and we manage that program for a fee, so it doesn't pay our wages, so the time that we spend on the program we have to be actually be aware of, aware of how much time you actually spend on that program in relation to what fee we get, we're currently getting ten percent of their budget which probably equates to one day's labour a week. But we go through the complex on an annual basis and change every smoke detector, but whereas that's the tenant's responsibility on the lease we do that as it provides us an opportunity to see every unit and every tenant and it's a day, a few hours out you know and you usually pick up in that afternoon a lot of the maintenance issues and we just pick up a lot of the things that need to be done. Or on the other hand apart from picking up things about the property, we mainly pick up information about the tenants health and well-being and other issues within the complex.

Mmm.

How well does current housing provision cater for older people's needs, and in particular for the needs of single older women?

Current housing? You mean housing generally?

Yes as in what's available.

Well if they've got the cash they can probably go and buy a nice retirement unit but if they, depending on the resources that are available I mean that, that, that's really a determining factor in what property you can access; and I guess our focus is on a minority of the general population who have, who are on a pension or benefit. I guess that's again what our focus is but there is no demand and supply in regard to affordable accommodation in regard to older people, older single women on the pension.

So you're basically saying that in current housing provision there's a gap for low-income earners.

There is, there is a, there is a, there's a problem with supply. Yeah in the affordable end of the market, if affordability is the issue the private sector probably can meet demand but with the end of the market that we focus on with issues of affordability, there's a shortage of supply, I'd say.

What sorts of housing works well for older people and for single older women in particular?

Level access [laughs].

Which is based on experience?

Well it's an issue I will say even with offices. I mean I laugh because I've been having conversations around level access generally, in relation not just to accommodation but also in relation to offices for services, people need level access. They need access so they can come straight in off the street in a wheel chair. They don't want stairs, not good, not good with regard to the provision of housing for people who are older or disabled, but also offices as well you need to have level access.

So housing is more than the house itself. It's also about access to services.

Yeah. Absolutely. Services are very important. I mean you need to be able to get into the house but to be able to get out of the house as well. And getting out of there isn't just about the construction and design of the property, it's also about the location of the property and the culture of the particular built environment, the closeness to services. I mean where our complex is, it's a short walk, it's a short level walk to a shop and the local shops, probably a hundred metres away, they will deliver. There's a medical centre and there's even a TAB, if people want recreational activities [laughs]. But there's, you know, it's not far from [name deleted] Hospital, so there's a range of services. It's a good location. We've had tenants move out to public housing properties actually which were better appointed, nice location on the [name of area deleted], but they weren't within walking distance of all the services and we've had tenants wanting to come back.

So [name of organisation deleted] bought them?

They built eight of the units on a piece of land, which fronts [name deleted] Road. The other units at the back in [name deleted] St, they were left to them as a bequest, which we started to manage them in 1999, because prior to that they were managed by [name deleted] headquarters, off the side of the [name of position in organisation deleted]'s desk, and as the [name of position in organisation deleted]'s get rotated every three years or less, often there were times where nothing was happening with the program. It wasn't being managed on a professional basis. Also, it wasn't being it didn't have the appropriate policies and paper work to provide a professional service.

So the eight, were they built recently on the same land?

'87 I think they were built.

So [name of organisation deleted] built adjoining units possibly with some government funding and the one behind was privately owned.

Yes it was privately owned and it was just a bequest.

So 24, 22 properties?

Well 18 and then there are four small houses on [name of street deleted] and they are 100 years old. There's a book that has a hundred properties.

A Hundred Hobart Houses?

Yeah A Hundred Hobart Houses and they're in it.

Lovely. I'll have a look.

In what ways could current housing provision be improved so that it better meets older people's needs and the needs of single older women in particular?

Well I guess one of the things we discussed about is I can see pros and cons. There are benefits too about making the one-bedroom units more adaptable. It's a question of whether to convert them to two bedrooms in the future or whether we run with what we've got or we build on. I don't think [name of organisation deleted] has made a decision on that but there are a number of options which I've presented and the options are do nothing, keep as is, convert two units into one or add another bedroom on the back. So it's always good to have three options and at this stage, the options are being considered.

Mmm.

But that's with regard to, our I guess our properties, but I mean generally there seems to be a demand and I think that's backed up by Housing Tasmania, there seems to be more of a demand for two bedroom units and whether you can manipulate demand by the allocation eligibility process but when you actually start looking at what people want as opposed to what they are eligible for, there can be a difference. But, it seems to be an interest in two bedroom units by individuals, so that they can have grand children over and not have them in the lounge room.

What key changes can you see happening in older people's housing in the future?

I think there'll be more of it. Although of course the average age of Tasmanians is only 37.

It's going up [laughs].

It's going up slowly yes, but it's still in the 30s [laughs]. I guess I've tended to, I tend to focus on the task in hand and that is managing the 30 units specific for older people. I mean we do have some older tenants in some of our two or three bedroom properties, which we manage for Housing Tasmania as well. But I guess I don't seem to think in terms of age with regard to those tenancies.

Mmm.

Which can be a good thing and it can be a bad thing. I mean sometimes you're not actually aware about specific, you're not thinking in terms of specific needs for those tenants only in general terms. I'm on about security. We've been putting mesh, wire meshes over glass panels beside front doors because they are a bit of a design problem. I mean they let light in but they also let other things in apart from the light. And putting dead bolts on doors and making sure everybody's got window locks that work, window locks that are appropriate; outside security lighting; but I guess it is about matching people with properties. That's what we're trying to do. I mean the alphabet starts with 'a' and the housing alphabet starts with allocation for me. You have to match the person to the properties, so that the property actually will meet the needs of the person. And I guess the thing about stairs is, I mean, we're allocating a property in West Hobart, which is up the top of [name deleted] St so it's quite steep, and it's not close to services. So we're looking at an application by a 62 year old woman and we're thinking it's not appropriate. It's got internal stairs. She doesn't have transport, her own transport. She'll have to use public transport, so we're thinking maybe we'll look for someone else.

Does she have mobility problems?

Oh no. She hasn't.

But you're thinking of the longer term?

Yeah because you know she'll have to get a bus to go down the shops and walk up and down the stairs and that's good for now but at the same time I'm not too sure about the external environment that she's going to, say her safety, as I'm familiar in the particular location there have been, there are some young, young teenagers with anti-social tendencies [laughs] and it might not be the right property for her with regard to those issues with regard to the property and with regard to access to other services and you know, just that she may not have experienced, or we don't think that she needs to experience some of the things that goes on in the street.

Mmm. Yeah whereas she's probably really keen for affordable housing and keen to take whatever.

Yeah the property you know. She's indicated that area to her is good, and it's fine, and I guess we're also trying to measure it up based on our experience. You know if we want to house someone we want to house them for life.

Yeah so what area is that?

[Description of a steep area in Hobart deleted].

It's up a hill.

Yeah it's up a hill and we have some long-term stable tenancies there. And they're not phased by neighbours who throw tantrums and throw stones at each other, as long as they're not part of it; but you know it's just that you have to be aware of the effect the neighbours can have on your own tenant, on their quiet enjoyment.

And it depends very much on the person there's no doubt.

It does. Yeah. Definitely.

I interviewed someone up that way and oh, she was a big strong strident women and she just told 'em [laughs]. She reckoned they didn't worry her.

Sounds like she told anybody that they would move on and that's what want, what you need.

She was imposing and she had some [physical] problems but it wasn't evident.

In some locations you need people who are assertive and who aren't going to attract the attention of people who pick on or look for victims.

Yeah.

Who look to take advantage of other people and unfortunately it does happen in particular streets and in some particular suburbs more so than in others. And I guess it can happen anywhere but there's a probability that it's more likely to happen in certain areas than others.

And in fact there was someone I interviewed in another area who was being badly victimized by neighbours.

Yeah and sometimes that comes down to, it can be an allocation issue or you don't know until you find out that you have a monster living next door.

Yes it can be just one person as you said before.

It can be. And because of quite a bit of mobility in private housing as well as the social housing system, so I'd say there's more in the private sector, you can have that more in private housing because there's more mobility and more insecurity of tenure your neighbours can change and that can change the whole complex of the street quite dramatically if you get somebody living next door to you who doesn't have well developed living skills or has different expectations and different practices with regard to hygiene and care.

All sorts of things, noise.

Noise or just basically anti-social, the worst-case scenario. It's difficult.

Are there any questions I've not asked you yet that I should have asked or any people you think I should talk to?

Well you might want to talk to [name and workplace deleted] however as she's just come into the position I'm not sure how much background she has in the field of aged housing. Sometimes you can learn things that are just as interesting.

Well most people have different experiences to bring to it.

Yes I think whether it's a personal experience or professional.

And another question, what does growing older mean to you?

Before I answer that question also you should talk to [name and position deleted].

So this is an outreach program?

Well it's not outreach, it's Commonwealth funded program, which provides support to people in their home, in private rental who are at risk of losing their home. It's [identifying information deleted]. But what does ageing mean to me? As the man who came into my office yesterday said the older you get the wiser you get and you try to avoid the mistakes you made before and if you don't you look foolish [laughs].

Mmm and he was a 60-year-old gentleman, he walked in "I'm looking for housing" and well presented, very well spoken but in the brief conversation we had he admitted several misdemeanours from his past. And it was quite a refreshing approach to making a housing application.

What to be open about ...

His past? Yeah. But on consideration we thought that perhaps he'd be better in one of our stand-alone public housing properties rather than a complex with primarily single women perhaps of an average age of 70. As we had made one or two mistakes in the past we've had gentlemen move in whose behaviour has been less than appropriate with his neighbours.

Was this to do with drinking?

With drinking. Yes you picked that in one. Yeah. Alcohol abuse is usually the substance of choice for the older gentlemen whereas young people tend to have more of a drug culture. [Conversation about a service provider deleted.] They refer quite a lot of women to [name of service deleted], which I guess I wouldn't refer people to or recommend as appropriate accommodation as I don't know how safe an environment that is for a single woman on her own. If she was, she'd have to be pretty assertive I think.

And a lot aren't.

Mmm. No. They're vulnerable. And that's why it's really important that they can actually ring up and that's what we tell our tenants. You can ring up any time and talk to us and one of us will answer because we divert the phone. One of us will be on call and you can talk to us.

And do they ring up very often?

No they don't abuse it. They only ring us if, it can be a minor thing like they're locked out and can't get in or the security lights aren't on right through the complex or the security lights are on 24 hours a day. But it's just the fact that they can and they appreciate it. They appreciate a responsive service. They appreciate a service which is personalised.

In cohousing people have told me that, exactly what you say but I think it's different in public housing but I don't know why. They say they like having their neighbours there and they know they can go to them if they want to but they don't.

It's just the fact of knowing you can. That there's somebody there external who cares and will listen and who will do something about it. But I think maybe it's easier to achieve. First I think people need to be willing to do that and have to be paid to do it, so you need resources. But at the same time it's economies of scale. If you had tenancy workers with two or three hundred properties they're going take six to twelve months to come up to speed with all those properties and the tenancies and their issues and then they'll be working to meet their needs.

And the thing is, the more there are the more it is to ask of someone because there's more chance they'll be called out and you'd probably want two on a roster system.

Oh yeah. We do one week on and one week off but we don't get called out because generally we find older tenants don't want to bother you. They don't want to put you to any trouble. The heater isn't working but they don't wake you up and tell you. Your heater isn't working so why didn't you tell me. I didn't want to bother you. I didn't want to be any trouble. You know you're freezing to death. You've not got a problem at all. This is part of the service.

I think that's part of the pressure people feel under in the rental market. I think there is research on that. They don't like to be a nuisance to their landlord for fear they'll be kicked out.

That's true, because there's a lack of security around that tenure.

Mmm.

Personally I think that people don't like to, they just don't like to bother whoever they perceive to be responsible.

But if you've got that written in the contract there's less need to ...

Yeah. I tend to personally; I just walk through the complex about once a week anyway. I walk round and people know that I do it, walk through, usually on a Friday afternoon. The usually come out.

If they've got something to talk to you about?

Yeah. Usually they come out for a chat or to tell me what somebody else has done but they know.

So it's something predictable.

It's something predictable. We used to collect the rent from four tenants on a Friday afternoon in the past. This was before Veterans Affairs had organised direct debit because all of the tenants were on direct debit, which takes the cash out of the equation. That's a very important issue because a lot of people don't want to go to the bank on a particular day because they feel vulnerable.

Yes.

At the ATM, they feel vulnerable on that particular day.

Pension day?

Yes pension day. So now there's no cash involved. It's a direct transfer through Centrelink. But the up side was that when we used to go out to them to collect the rents from Veterans Affairs the tenants all said other people would come. So as you said that was predictable and they miss that so I guess that's why I still go up there, on a Friday afternoon just to have a walk through. But it also gives me a chance to check on any maintenance that's been done

because although the tenant themselves is responsible at least to do dripping taps; we get that done as a courtesy really. It only costs 40 bucks but it's really better if it gets it done in time.

Just to make sure that the place is properly maintained.

That it's done right, yeah, yeah.

How old are you?

Forty-five. I haven't started lying about my age yet.

You might never feel the need. You might be proud [laughs].

One of the things I guess about our complex is that a lot of people say I want to get my name down for that place. I want to get a unit in there. There's a huge demand for it.

In your older person's complex?

Yeah. We get a lot of people applying from [name of public housing complex deleted].

Mmm.

And the reason is unfortunately there's a feeling that Housing Tas does this to us. The feeling that there's a lack of consultation and that they're putting people in there with mental health issues and so it's not safe and they don't have that sense of ownership and that sense of community. And that's what's really important. If they all feel that people are being informed and they all know what's going on, you know. The differences between people aren't insurmountable. They just need enough in common to get on but when there are major differences between people, in complexes especially that creates huge barriers.

Yeah.

Which is understandable. So if somebody is in there, who is different to everybody else, they know and there's a certain resentment towards them. It is impacting on them immediately whereas if you're in a street you don't have to know who's living next door. In a complex it's a different ball game.

Yeah and especially with the design.

Exactly. There's more interaction and there's a need for people to have better developed, more communication skills. Because they are more likely to interact as they pass each other's units they look into each other's units.

A possible improvement could be to design, if you do have to have medium density, is to design in a way where that was less than perhaps it is in a lot of the ones we have now.

It's a difficult one. It's more easy I guess to, to manage smaller programs. And so like I said about allocation because it's personalised just by the numbers basically because there is larger scale because it's larger, larger scale units and while there's an economy of scale there's always more people involved so there's more variety with regard to all the processes you tend to take on, I mean there's variety in different service centres, different regions and I guess different work cultures. When you've only got three people working in a team it's easier you know if you meet every week and discuss what you do it's a lot easier to be working from the same base and to be presenting a similar service, the same service.

Yes and from what you say. I heard someone say that recently and I think it was an older person talking about housing, was that well we already know that if it's more than about 12 or 15 houses that it doesn't

work. That the smaller number, it's very hard to deal with sometimes 30. Although depending on the design, if the houses are in clusters it might work better than some that might have thirty or more.

There's physical separation between the 18 and the four but yeah I think in theory you can make large numbers work but it's harder, that's the thing.

But people have to adjust to it yes. They have to learn to live in it like where I live up the street from about 48 public housing units. I know from talking to the people there, a lot of them they just stay inside. They don't like to go out when they're there.

Yeah, yeah. But you get, I mean, you can have 30 good tenancies you know and if you've got ten indifferent ones and five bad ones, that means the whole place goes to the dogs.

Or even one.

Or even one, if they're special [laughs].

A history of serious assault.

Everyone'll be staying inside and you'll be locking the door as well. But unfortunately in tenancy management you tend to focus on the difficult issues. Whereas with the 100, well we've currently got a 116 public housing properties, I don't get to see all the tenants who look after their property, pay the rent. I tend to see all the tenants who are late with the rent but they are paying it off now, because our arrears are \$1,050. So we tend to see people who don't comply with the lease. And the people who do on a larger scale we don't see, we only see them yearly on the property inspection or if there's a particular maintenance issue, when a tree falls down. Or they ring us up or they come to a social function like a barbecue.

So you could get a negative attitude towards your tenants, couldn't you?

You could. Yeah you could. But because we have a bond saving scheme when people pay off their bond they keep saving and so we get to see the good savers. We've got tenants say that have got \$1,500. And we say what are you going to do with all the money and he said what money. He didn't know he'd saved \$1,500 because they've just been putting away \$15 to \$20 a fortnight for three years. And they've forgotten about it so it's been painless. So you do get to see positives and I think for us it's really important to see the positives because if all you see is the negatives it's not a good work experience. If it's all negative it doesn't have a good effect on you, on your state of mind.

On how you interpret what happens.

Yeah so for me it's probably positive that I go to [name of unit complex deleted] once a week and see the tenants. It's for my benefit.

Worker 5

Firstly, I'd like to take down some details about your work background, such as any previous training you may have had and the length of time you have been working in this area.

I have a degree in Occupational Therapy. I graduated in 1978. I've worked in aged care for the last 17 years, in community outreach for the last 12 years.

So by aged care do you mean in a nursing home?

No. Well just in care of the elderly. Our sort of core population is 65 and over.

What are the key policy objectives of your organisation in relation to housing provision for older people?

Well I thought that question had two, sort of components. I mean we certainly deal with the individual and their housing needs on a day to day basis and we're very much involved in improving home safety and access into and out of the home and within the home. And we also act, we act for them in an advisory capacity and the same for, sort of community groups such as in the past I've been involved in designing for the elderly, the Abbeyfield projects and for hostel, independent units for aged care facilities. Housing Services use us quite a lot.

So actually advising on design as well as on specific situations?

Yes, yes, yeah. And you can do that for the individual as well, as well as for the, the community. So there are often situations where people are relocating and they've sold their old home and they're wanting to build another and they'll come along to you with their floor plans, or they will ask for information before they even get to that stage. So ...

Is that if they have a disability of some kind?

No, not necessarily. I mean for some it's just that they recognise they're getting older and, need to plan for that a little better. Others, there is an existing disability and they, and they just want to sort of, are getting prepared for you know for the worst-case scenario and have every base covered, you know if that's possible.

Well it's good to know that people are doing that. How are they referred to you?

Our referral system is very open so they can refer themselves. Most of our referrals come to us by community nurses or doctors. They can be referred by any other agency whether it's government or non-government, but relatives, friends. It doesn't matter.

It must keep you busy.

Well. Yes. [Laughs.]

What do you regard as the most pressing issues in relation to older people's housing at the present time?

Well you know I think there's inadequate suitable housing for the elderly. Are you wanting to me to, specifically address women or ...

Well with a slant towards women if it's appropriate, but otherwise...

Well you know I see, I think there's and that's sort of, and that's across the board whether it's owner occupied, private rental, public housing, or retirement village sort of situation I think especially in Hobart because of the geography, I mean it's such a hilly city, access is a huge issue and that's you, not just, you know because there are so many high set homes, there are lots of steps and also just yards that are so very steep, even getting out onto the footpath, to get to your mailbox, taking the garbage out you know, access is huge in general. That's a problem. I think security is a real concern ...

In what way?

Well a lot of people we see are concerned about their personal safety.

But are you aware of any particular issues with their housing where security is a problem?

Oh well, absolutely. I mean for a start when they come to the door they don't necessarily have you know clear vision to see who's at the door. They're often, you know they don't have the peepholes. Or, I mean now they're starting to, there are these you know, these one-way security screens where they can see out but you can't see in; that's starting. I'm starting to notice that there's more and more of that. So there's the security screen doors; just you know, just the fact that often old people because of problems with maintenance which is a big issue, because they may maintain the house but they don't maintain the yard. That's very evident. I can normally, you can have a fair bet when you pull up outside whether you're at the right address because there's a certain look about older people's homes, often, especially older women.

As in?

Well it tends to be a little less well kept, you know the yard's probably not so well tended. The house is not as well cared for and so that's an issue, you know it's sort of more readily identified. So yeah so maintenance is huge I think and how people sort of manage that as they age, with housing. The yard size and you know, therefore the issues around that. And yet I think often people like to have a yard included with their housing because pets are such a big issue for them and you know often, getting involved with them, they feel more secure if they've got a dog and that's sort of like a deterrent. I think outlook with your housing. You know, how it's situated. How, I think often it's better to have an outlook where people can see activity rather than a beautiful view because it's more exciting for them. I don't know if I'm getting off track.

No, I think this is interesting. It's different from what other people have said so it's good to get. You know, it gives a more complete picture.

You know, location you know in terms of close to transport and shops, medical care; appropriateness of footpaths. As people get older you know it's all well and good to have the nice house but if they don't have the sealed surfaces outside to walk on safely or to use their scooter or their electric wheelchair or whatever, that's a real issue.

Someone had mentioned that before about the scooter, about the footpath not being safe for the scooters with three wheels.

And it's also gutter ramps and things like that.

Yeah.

But I think you know it's across the board whether it's in private homes, or private rental housing or public housing there's probably inadequate suitable homes. You know, there's just aren't the numbers there. That's what I think.

What are the key housing needs of older people, bearing in mind the needs of single older women in particular?

Well I'm thinking I'd rehash all that.

So as in those are the issues, but if you had an older person you know, living in that kind of situation, what their key needs would be to improve their housing; something like that.

Particularly, an example?

Well key needs; someone might say, oh it's affordability, that's why the housing's like that; or it's inadequate local government planning provision; or something like that, or design.

Well I think design

Loneliness?

Well affordability I think is a major, a major factor because as you age a lot of people we see are on a very limited income, and often they just don't have a choice. They're stuck where they are; and then of course that follows through to upkeep of the home and that flows through to just sort of adequate heating...

So you find that in the people you see, that adequate heating is something they need.

Oh absolutely, there are times when you go into a home and you'll need your coat on and gloves and your nose'll still be dripping, that cold. Yeah and your breath will be frosty inside the house. Mmm.

It can't be good for their health.

No, no. And like even with public housing they, I think there've been huge advances in terms of better catering for the older person and the disabled, but again there just isn't sufficient supply so it just doesn't keep up with demand but they have been really quite proactive in terms of attempting to improve the design of homes and they really are trying to think through the issues much more carefully and they often consult with us and they obviously have their own planners and architects and, and they listen to what the existing tenants say and I think they are quite proactive in terms of getting feedback. Mmm. I've been quite impressed, with the improvement

They're working to the adaptable housing standards too, at different levels of that.

But in terms of the smart homes and purpose built.

And in all new homes.

Yea I think they really are and they're attempting to sort of buy better blocks, which you know, are more level and well located.

[Interruption as someone comes into the tea room.]

What do older people in general, and single older women in particular, want from their housing?

Well I think first and foremost, safety; comfort. They want to feel part of the community, close to family and facilities. Good access. Mmm, you want anything more specific such as the type.

Well if you talk to them, I suppose you have a particular focus but yeah like this is a general open ended question but certainly things like security.

Well I mean in terms of what they want it's like, if they've got the choice, if they can afford to choose it seems to me that they'd prefer to have something smaller and more manageable. Something warm, something safe, good aspect. Uh but they don't want to be removed from what's familiar.

That's exactly my thought because that's what a lot of people have said, often they want to stay where they are.

Mmm. And the other thing is again, I mean a lot of this is generalisation, but it often strikes me that people often like to have what's familiar to them in the sense of the design of the home. I interviewed a woman just recently and she was in this lovely unit. It was very, very modern and she said it took her quite some time to get accustomed to that because she missed the wood paneling and I guess what was more familiar to her in the older home.

The character of an older house?

Yes, yes. I mean it was beautiful and light and bright and easy maintenance but it didn't have that character that they find really... I think a lot of women are also, especially women, look for probably the retirement village situation, which if they can afford them again, because they get more assistance. Then often affordability is a factor there in quite a big way because of the increasing costs, so although they may buy in they'll have ongoing costs in terms of the sort of monthly payments.

In the private ones, but in the non-profit ones it's probably not as costly but there aren't so many.

No I mean they're very limited in supply. They like to have some spare, you know a spare room too I mean and that's very limited in public housing. I mean they might look more specifically at the absolute basic raw needs, but they don't often take into account ...

Social needs.

Like having a spare room for the family to come and stay. But they'll think a single person will only need the one bedroom.

Yeah. It doesn't work well as housing, as a base to live your life.

No. I guess it's just you know I'm just thinking of the isolation sort of aspects. People like to have that connection but they also like their privacy so I think that's quite, something that can be difficult to sort of to work out and get the right balance.

Because it'd be different for different people.

Yeah.

What sorts of housing works well for older people and for single older women in particular?

Uh.

I know you've said there's not enough.

Well I feel that it's ...

There's not enough of the right kind of housing; not enough options.

Yeah to me it's more sort of availability, lack of availability and lack of choice.

The sort of thing you're talking about, you seem to be saying that there are some drawbacks about a three-bedroom house on a large block in the suburbs, with a lovely view.

Yes however you've got to combine that with moving them out of what's familiar. So I mean it is a real issue I think in terms of people being able to maintain that home and stay where they are and it's an absolute struggle. But then they're faced with relocating and affording that, and facing you know all this lack of support and things that aren't familiar.

You mean in moving?

Yes.

Or you mean if they have to move from established support networks?

Mmm.

So what about in retirement villages? I mean how well do you think they meet their needs? You originally mentioned them along with all the ones that didn't meet the need.

Well I guess they seem to fall into two categories. There are those who are very happy and I guess it comes down to the fact that they feel really secure and they feel that if, I guess, they need to step out to go to care they're sort of in the system and they've got like minded people around them and they're sort of, of a similar age and they don't have to contend with a more hybrid community and that sort of suits a lot of people; but I think then there are others that miss the flexibility that retirement villages can bring in terms of ...

Do you mean that retirement villages don't have the flexibility?

That their own home offered, yes, yes.

And in terms of social interaction.

It's more sanitized

So more institutional?

That's right and they don't feel they've got that sort of freedom to do, the garden's not exactly their own even though they have their own patch of earth, but they still feel that ...

Probably be hard for them to have a pet there.

I'm not aware, I'm not aware that they even have pets.

So you've not thought of that before?

I'm just trying to think of any that, yeah. I can't think of pets in retirement villages, I mean whether I've come across any, but... and certainly, but I mean you know at least they've got their facilities in terms of the access and you know the bathroom's been better designed normally and they've got the token rec. hall.

Token rec hall. [Laughs.]

I mean I don't think it's often utilized. It's there. I think it's token often.

I've heard people say that, even in [name of retirement village deleted] with some of the facilities there. And what about Abbeyfield? I mean how well do you think Abbeyfield caters for older people's needs?

I haven't been exposed to Abbeyfield more recently but then again I think it's horses for courses. It seems to work well for some and really badly for others. Uh so it's, I think the concept is lovely. I think it's got to be, if people are able to have a trial run I think that would be very useful.

Which they do.

I was just trying to remember what the policy was.

I think they can stay there for up to three months to try it.

I think that's a good thing because I've certainly been aware of people who have gone in and really not gelled.

And it can spoil it for everyone, so there's two sides to it. So what sort of people do you think it suits better?

Ah well I think someone who likes to have that sort of, who can share well. Just like to have people around them and not be such a loner. I guess a team player.

Yeah because there; there's not a lot of choices between being with others or in privacy, I mean either you're in your room or you're with others.

Yes I think that's it I think it's actually quite, I mean the concept's lovely but I think the reality can be quite limiting. That's my sense of it.

Even in terms of your own visitors.

In terms of having the guests stay? Yeah. Look I guess you know I've seen two extremes. I've seen those who just love it and it works very, very well. It just seems to just be a real extreme reaction, or those who just, and it's possible it's because of personality clashes.

What about having family, family visiting? How do people manage that?

I don't think I could really comment on that.

I was just thinking that possibly if they didn't have a family around and liked company it might be better but if they had grand children they wanted to have visit or children, it'd be limited for them to do that unless they go out.

I couldn't agree with that. I couldn't really comment. I've not really been exposed to those sorts of issues.

In what ways could current housing provision be improved so that it better meets older people's needs and the needs of single older women in particular?

Well I think a combination. I think you know there are some who love their own home and there are others who'd love to be in a retirement village situation and those who ... I think you'd need to have a choice. Those who like the Abbeyfield I suppose. You know I'm quite, I think I've got to be reasonably optimistic, sort of approach, you know or

sort of outlook in terms of public housing because I really think they are getting their act right. Moving in the right direction.

And even in the past it's well maintained housing and pretty robust.

Mmm. Mmm. And I think too all the government agencies, local, state and federal are all starting to become much more aware of the issues. And I think older people are starting to have a stronger voice as time goes on, especially the Baby Boomers coming through who will have a much more powerful vote.

And so the Councils have signed some agreement now about supporting aged care developments, as in nursing homes and hostels and probably retirement villages I think. But I don't know whether you know, [name deleted] told me about the survey Hobart City Council did a few years ago on the needs of people aged over 60 in the HCC area. And they got a very, very clear result that they wanted walkable areas around their home and the conclusion from the report was that they didn't need to do anything.

Oh well I would question that. I mean there's enormous improvement needed for that.

Oh well you can even make hills more negotiable.

Yes, yes, yes.

Some footpaths are dreadful and the ramps are dangerous.

Oh yes, yes. It's just, it's appalling. And we have a need for a lot of toilet stops for older people when they're out and about, they can't be too far from an accessible toilet.

[Name deleted] mentioned that.

I know we're getting away from the topic.

Oh no, that's important because that's what I mean, where you live it's not only just the house, it's the community in which you live. Someone said you not only need to, to get into the house, you need to be able to get out of it too. It's not much use having a good house if you can't go anywhere.

You know it's certainly struck me over the years that that's why outlook is imperative and it's not necessarily the beautiful view, it's the community and seeing other people and what they're doing and you know coming and going and being able to see your neighbour and not being so heavily screened by shrubs and trees, and you know, being on the bus route, being near the school, just everyday life. And that's where certainly people living in a retirement village would dip out. So it's interesting because I understand that [name of nursing home deleted] are attempting to introduce that sort of concept.

What, a pedestrian friendly environment?

No in terms of having it more typical of the community, that was my understanding initially that they're trying to have, like they have [name of retirement village deleted] the aged care facility and the independent units et cetera. Well they don't have the independent sort of units, they've got more the hostel style arrangement and they've clustered group homes I think from memory. But it was my understanding they were attempting to actually develop the community as a unit, like a spread of community and they were wanting to have a childcare facility and a hairdresser and a local shop and the butcher et cetera.

So people would come in there?

Yes. So it sort of becomes incorporated and becomes like a more normal environment rather than like a segregated aged care or retirement village area.

Yeah. That sounds positive.

I think people are sort of moving in the right direction slowly and you know I feel quite positive about the, I mean affordability is an over riding and well I mean the ever present and I don't think that's going to change quickly.

What key changes can you see happening in older people's housing in the future?

I just said all that. Well I guess more funding in general but I see that will come in time given that we're going to have growth though as we age. I just think you know there will be greater choice and there'll be more versatility because there'll be greater awareness of more issues than there has been in the past.

So about how housing can contribute to health? I think, good housing so people probably don't have to end up in a hostel or nursing home if their housing is more appropriate?

Well I guess you know our services very much focus on keeping people in their home for as long as they wish to be and you know we try to facilitate that. We try to keep them as safe as possible, as independent as possible.

So what are the most important things we could do to facilitate that?

Well I guess we would have to maintain our service and it would have to grow as the need grows, so it comes down to funding I suppose. You need to have sort of support services and they have to be affordable. People need to be able to tap into having someone being able to help them in the yard, help them around the home, the home handyman, even things like changing light bulb, and repairing the sticky window or ...

So if you're not in a retirement village or public housing or community housing you get help with that, but if you're just on your own you don't.

No in private, no that's right. I mean although there are things like community work orders, sometimes it's to help people maintain their yard but even that is you know for elderly people having people on work orders, inviting them into their own yard, well ... it's quite threatening.

People they don't know?

Yes. Especially with women. Well if that's an issue in terms of maintenance and care and they're asking for us to recommend people, often they will actually specify that they would prefer a female and that's not always easy to come by. It's not so hard for gardening but for the home maintenance side it's quite difficult to get them. And they're quite anxious about having a man come into home.

So by community work orders you mean someone who's committed some sort of a crime?

Yes but see, we see so many people on pensions and money is the overriding factor in maintaining the house and the yard or having someone else in to do their shopping or whatever, so they're always looking for the cheaper option and the cheapest option for mowing the lawn is a work order if it's available in the area, but there's a down side to that.

So are there any problems with security there? Have people been targeted sometimes by people on work orders doing work at their place?

I have no idea. If I offer it I always caution them to think carefully about it. Some people are very comfortable about it and others aren't ...

I suppose if they stay in the house and someone is supervising them.

Mmm. But they don't necessarily have. It's not as if they always have the on-site supervision. They'll be left to do the work and... that's my understanding of it.

But even though there's a lot we can do to help people stay in their home and a lot of them want to do that and it's possible, there are also some homes, that no matter what you do it's not going to be suitable.

Absolutely. Yes. That's I mean some of these huge old houses, even if ... you couldn't heat them adequately. They're draughty and badly planned and yeah, on a steep block. There's nothing you can do to change that and the options for getting them access is often out of their price range too because you're looking at huge ramps or lifts or stair climbers and all that's very expensive.

Are there any questions I've not asked yet that you think I should have asked or any other people that you think I should talk to? If so, could please tell me about them.

Well I think on the private side, architects are much more aware. I think were they to design like the new homes being built, I think they would design in more suitable locations and will be much more mindful of the, you know, of an appropriate floor plan. Uh and I think they would sort of plan the footpaths et cetera much better. Public housing as I've said, I think they've already been addressing that. Retirement villages, well not enough. More money needed; but they also have to keep a reign on how much it's costing. Because I hear that quite often, the people saying they just can't keep up with the ongoing costs.

Not money getting in there but the fees when they get in there?

Mmm.

Yeah and how much is that about demand and supply too and so I suppose that's there for the people who can afford it. That's what other people have said, you know, if you can afford it you can get good housing.

It all seems to come back to the money doesn't it?

Mmm. Starting to wind up now because we must be getting towards the end [of the tape]. It's probably still got a few minutes but not that many; but this is a question that I've been adding that's not there. What does growing older mean to you? How old are you?

I'm 47. Well I actually look forward to it in light in having more time available to me to sort of do things of my choosing. Not the things I have to do, to earn a living to run a household. I think it's sort of more about your personal time. I think it's something I look forward to in many respects; so I can pursue my interests more, have more time to travel.

Would you change your housing?

I'm very aware of the issues involved. Not necessarily. I've thought that out already. If I needed to I could stay in my home with few sort of modifications though not necessarily and the only problem with me would be the large yard area and the maintenance of that and the outside of the home. But again it'd come down to my disposable income at the time. If I could afford to pay the people to assist me with that ...

So do you feel you will have the income afford that?

I'd have some.

Do you have a timeframe when you think you might retire?

Well if we could afford to, probably 55 [laughs]. If we could afford to.

And what about health? Do you think about your own health in relation to growing older?

Yes I do. Yes I do. Yeah I'm very, and I guess that's one of the reasons why we are sort of looking at retiring. Or maybe even semi-retirement, we might still do some work but just have more control over how long, you know the hours that we work. Yeah but because of health, because I guess with the nature of my work I'm very mindful of how health has such an impact on your lifestyle and I'd hate to get there and then not have the health to enjoy it [laughs]. So I often think maybe I'd be better off to retire earlier, or semi retire and have more time to sort of enjoy ourselves, is what we'd like to do.

Which is the way I think a lot of Baby Boomers are going, thinking of keeping up some part time to work so they've still got the income to live the lifestyle they want to live.

Mmm, and while they've got their health. Mmm.

So you must see a lot of people like 85 or over. I mean how do you think of what life might be like for them.

[Laughs.] Yes we do see them. It can be actually quite depressing at times because the overriding thought that I have is their dislocation from family and community and I'm repeatedly told you know by people "Don't get older!" and then often it's so sad.

They tell you themselves?

Yes they say to me "Don't get older, dear". [Laughs.] And I think how sad but it seems to come down to poor physical health because if they've got poor health and if they've got memory loss they're often not completely aware of the issues, but yeah it's the isolation and loneliness that's most difficult and that's often combined with poor health so they can't do what they'd like to do. They can't get out. They can't travel to visit family or, and money that's another thing too.

Do you think people do better in congregate living, like in retirement units or an Abbeyfield, when people get to that stage and would probably be happier and have a better life?

[Pause.] You can't seem to often; no it's really difficult to answer that. You know I mean, from their perspective I don't think so necessarily. From the outside looking in I often think they would be, but if you suggest it to them and often that's part of I, you sort of explore, see if they'd be better off in a different sort of set up, they will vehemently deny that that's what they want.

Mmm. I've found that with the women I've been interviewing, living on their own.

So it's quite interesting you know from your perspective you know you might think that they may be better served to be elsewhere but more often than not they won't.

Social stimulation might be more beneficial in some ways.

Oh I think social stimulation would be wonderful if it came to them but often they, they just don't seem to want to move from their home.

[Conversation deleted.]

27/10/2004

Worker 6

Firstly, I'd like to take down some details about your work background, such as any previous training you may have had and the length of time you have been working in this area.

Just specifically relating to this or my career?

Well if you think your career's relevant?

Mmm ok. Registered nurse and also I was involved in a lot of quality assurance programs. I am an accredited ISO auditor which has been very helpful and my last ten years have been in the community and the last 18 months with the Aged Care Assessment Team.

Mmm-mmm. So you haven't been in the Assessment Team very long?

No, no, not very long.

So you're fresh, not burnt out maybe.

That's what happened with the last job. I got tired.

What are the key policy objectives of your organisation in relation to housing provision for older people?

Well I'm not, I wouldn't be quoting policy objectives but my understanding is that there's been a real shift from housing in general, trying to keep people in the community.

Mmm.

Both from a financial point of view in that it costs less to keep people in the community rather than aged care facilities but also that that's where people want to be, so capacity building in communities and really working to try and get more services and more ongoing strong support services in place I think has been a real focus for the Department. They're trying to stretch the almighty dollar.

Mmm and so part of your role involves going to people's homes?

Yes we, we see people in a range of places, in their homes, in hospitals, in respite.

What do you regard as the most pressing issues in relation to older people's housing at the present time?

Anecdotally I think that they feel vulnerable, so safety and security's a big issue because society's changed so much, also the breakdown of the extended family so that the nuclear family has sort of segregated older people in a way. And probably other marginalised groups. Access and equity are other issues too. Access not just on an availability level but even down to concrete and access on a literal level of getting around and making it easier, having places like Housing Department units or other sort of facilities purpose built with people in mind, for their changes, how they grow older.

So as people are staying in the community, like if they were having difficulty they might have gone to a nursing home or hostel before but now they're in the community you're saying there's an issue about them being able to live in the community and access services or whatever they need to use.

Yes, a lot of it depends on what people want too. You can offer services and they refuse. They decline because they feel that that's impinging on their independence and also a control issue of they, maybe you're going to come in and take over, so a bit of fear of the unknown.

Yes so there's two parts to that then and you implied the two parts before. So you're talking about physical accessibility of services but then you're also talking about when older people are in their homes there's an issue about them being able to access the services that are available because of those kinds of issues too.

Mmm, mmm, even stupid things like putting the garbage out. The Hobart City Council's been really innovative and they're actually offering a service where they will go and collect the garbage and wheel it up to the front and then when it's empty they put it back where it comes from and it is a little tiny thing but it makes a world of difference to people's outlook and anxiety and how they present to themselves, present themselves in the community.

So there are issues where older people can no longer put their garbage out.

Ooh yeah, yeah, a couple of steps and they just can't pull the big, big wheelie bins up. Gardening's another issue that hasn't been addressed so in the olden days people saw how other people coped or how they presented to the community by the state of their garden and the lawns and there was a lot of pleasure but also dignity and people being proud of how their places were so to them now not being able to maintain some semblance of that level of putting forward a face to the community really upsets them and also the issue that if it looks bad then burglars will come or louts will harass them because they know they're old people.

Yeah, so there's practical issues as well as issues of identity as a member of society.

Oh yeah, yeah it's very complex. [Laughs.] There was a report done a few years ago and one of the big reasons why people went into or wanted to access aged care services was gardens.

Laughs.

Which is bizarre.

Yeah because there are other cheaper ways of dealing with that issue.

Well it's quite expensive, privately if you wanted to get Jim's Mowing or VIP or someone like that you know it does cost.

It's expensive if you're on a pension.

Yes, if you're on a pension.

Do you have any idea what it might cost?

No, no but from what they're saying it's significant.

Some of these questions might sound similar but I find I'm getting different answers to the. So, what are the key housing needs of older people, bearing in mind the needs of single older women in particular?

I think a sense of security, a sense of continuity, being able to afford it and having not just the security of maintenance of and the back-up service perhaps, you know an alarm bell or something like that, but the security of being able to stay. The rental issues and you know the uncertainty and issues like that.

So you see people in rental housing.

Yes, from really rich people to really poor people. Yeah. I think the issues are similar regardless of whether you've got money or not. The vulnerability again, I just keep coming back to that one all the time.

Mmm. So can you tell me a bit more about it then?

The people would, I'm a stranger going into their homes and they'd feel strongly enough to bring it up as an issue that's important to them. So the fact that they're able to do that, either means I've got great charismatic people skills or it's a real issue for them and I'm thinking that I'm ok but it really is a big issue for them.

Are you talking about one of the issues is if they're in rental, whether they're going to be able to stay?

Whether they're going to be able to stay on a level of the mechanics of how, how rental works and also things like if, if you get bad neighbours or you know it attracts people who, who aren't very nice then that makes it really hard.

You mean if they don't keep the house up?

No.

Or rental accommodation?

Rental accommodation, if you're in units or villas or however it is, that, that the people around you, the environment around you is really important to get that sense of community and again, security.

So you think if it was all rental there's likely to be more issues?

I think rental you have less control and you're more open to be placed in a position not of your choosing.

Mmm. So you're talking about private rental?

Both.

And public rental as well?

Yeah. Yeah. Because it's such a hassle to move and people, especially older people and again with you're focusing on the single older woman it is expensive there's the networks you've established. There's the security of, of the time that you've spent there and even emotional issues like memories and things. To uproot yourself because you've got bad neighbours, I mean it happens if you own a house but at least you've got a bit more control.

Yeah, and some people deal with those issues better than others don't they.

They certainly do. Mmm.

Yeah.

How well does current housing provision cater for older people's needs, and in particular for the needs of single older women?

Well generally I mean just as a general statement I think that they'd like adequate facilities. Adequate access to the community, maintenance, ongoing maintenance; that their feelings of security are met. I think that's about it; affordable.

I think you said access to services, so when you say that what, how can housing deliver that. What sort of services were you talking about?

Housing Department or housing?

Well any sort of housing, whatever the housing is.

Like all things unless it's pertinent to you at the time, you're not going to listen to it. So even though there is a lot of advertising and promotion of services until it has a relevance for you you're not really tuning in on it. So making sure that places that are frequently accessed, like GPs, shopping centres, maybe even you know council sort of newspapers or newsletters, whatever they've got, continually run promotion of their local services; and opportunities when they arise, worked in the community for a long time we took opportunities like local shows, expos, developing rapport with local groups, being guest speakers and really trying to get out there and, and get the message across to let people know that there is support and services available.

Mmm. And do you think those services are adequate?

I don't think they're ever adequate. I don't think you're ever going to be able to meet the demand or the perceived demand. And also people's demand, or what they verbalise, is not really what they turn out that they want or the other side of it is that it isn't realistic.

Mmm. So I'm not sure what you mean but I suppose you might be talking about help with the housework or garden or meals.

Nighttime's a big issue particularly for older women. No one's going to stay with them over night. No matter what suggestions you put in place: Red Cross alarms, having the mobile by the bed, leaving the light on, making sure they've got adequate security, the fact is that they're alone in the home by themselves.

And they feel vulnerable.

And they feel vulnerable.

That's one of the first things you said.

Nothing's going to address that, just as an example.

So you think for some that might be a reason to want to move to somewhere else?

Definitely.

And if they choose to move or want to move, I mean what sorts of options are there for them that you're aware of?

Well with my age group that I work with, they want to go into a nursing home.

And the policy is about keeping them out these days if they don't absolutely need nursing home care?

Well, you offer, you offer services and you make sure that they're able to make an informed decision by bringing them up to speed with what's available and if someone talks to me like that and I'm sort of oh my god, why would you want to go into a nursing home ...

Mmm. And yet some don't want to go into one. Yeah.

Mmm. That you know you make sure that they understand what is available so that the decision they're making is informed.

Yeah. So you're talking about people who are having health and mobility issues at this point no doubt, or they wouldn't want to go into a nursing home.

Not necessarily. Depression and anxiety is rampant.

Oh.

And it may be in conjunction with other issues but it may not be the reason why they're seeking supported accommodation. Depression and anxiety is rampant among the elderly.

So just having the reassurance of having someone there,

Mmm. Mmm.

And the fear of not being able to cope?

Mmm. There's a great concept called Abbeyfield where people, and it does seem to attract an inordinate amount of older women, which I don't know if it's because of the support and the community thing or the fact that women outlive their husbands usually or both.

So there's more of them and they're poorer.

Then there's also the, the new ones that are opening up, like that one at Claremont.

Village Life.

That's it, Village Life. So offering that community sense of well being, security, meals and all that nasty boring stuff done for you but still maintaining your independence.

Yes so that's an alternative that might not have been so readily available before, an alternative to a nursing home, that's a niche that's being filled now.

Abbeyfield was available but it's limited because it's a small concern, so something like this Village Life is really big. I mean a lot of people were attracted to Derwent Waters, same sort of thing, a lot of women over there.

Provided they've got the money to buy in there I guess.

Provided they've got the money, yeah, yeah. I mean whereas with Village you still have to have a bit of money I think.

I don't know what the terms are to go in there.

Mmm.

What sorts of housing works well for older people and for single older women in particular?

As I said before I don't think you'll ever meet the demand. I think it's unrealistic of us to expect the government to fix everything,

Mmm-mmm.

That's another issue. I think it meets the demands reasonably well if you compare us with lots of other countries, we're very fortunate. People don't want to know that when you're talking to them because they're focused on now and here. The fact that we've got long waiting lists for public housing and the recent explosion with rental markets because of the real estate boom; that makes it again more difficult. I'm not really sure like on any statistical level how well it meets the demand. I haven't seen any stories about homeless people [laughs], older women out on the street.

[Laughs.]

So it's hard to sort of measure.

Yeah. I suppose that would be one indication, wouldn't it, but how many are living quietly in very difficult circumstances and their health deteriorating when it need not and with limited access to services and no-one knows about them.

Yeah, yeah. So it's an unknown quantity. I know people like the Salvation Army and uh women's health centres and things have a great demand on their services for people who have issues and need support. So I'd say that's indicating that the demand isn't being met.

Mmm. Yes and I hadn't thought of it that way in terms of, oh well it's just more if you had an idea what housing was out there, given the housing that you see people in, a sense of that's if that's what is available how well is that meeting their needs. Just from your immediate experience of it.

Ok. Most people that you see, older people and again women are in their family homes so they're very reluctant to move on, when you talk about things like downsizing, getting something with level access, better community access, being able to stay at home longer because they would have that control over their environment. Mostly they say no, because of the memories. They're too important; o in a way I see premature admission to aged care facilities and people struggling. I've met quite a few women who are housebound because of access issues and they won't move.

Mmm.

And you wait for a crisis because nothing's going to shift them, heaven or earth.

And then they end up in aged care?

Well they end up not having choices. And that's the really hard thing to try and get across to them is empowering them that they actually are able to make decisions to improve their lifestyle or however they see it, whatever's good for them and they're reluctant to, to move with that. I don't know whether it's a generational because the husband always looked after things or ah women in that generation didn't make those sort of decisions or they're too tired and frail.

Mmm. The significance of home to women of that generation.

Home's very important and memories.

Mmm yeah and perhaps also still having a place where their children and grandchildren can come that has memories for them too.

Yes, yeah but the sad thing is it works against them in a, in another level.

Yeah that, so do you see people who have moved and who've found it's turned out positively?

Oh yes and found people who've gone into aged care facilities that were struggling at home and blossomed in that, in that supportive environment so they really enjoyed the company also having all the tedious tasks done for them.

So you're talking about hostel care rather than nursing home when you're talking about the ones who blossomed, or independent living units?

Yeah, I'm talking about nursing homes. They don't call it nursing and hostel they call it low care and high care.

Oh it's changed.

Yeah changed again just to keep us on our toes, so I'm referring to low care. People that go in ...

So what might have been called hostel but it could be a range of different types of accommodation.

Yeah, yeah.

So people that go in?

I've forgotten [laughs].

Oh sorry. [Laugh.] Yeah, I don't have much firsthand experience. I've got a very dreary picture of nursing homes as being like a hospital

Oh god, some of them are gorgeous!

And sharing rooms and ...

Pretty well done with now, most of them are single rooms with an en suite.

Is this with the new standards?

Well because I think people's quality of life improved, their expectations and they're saying the Baby Boomers are going to be disgusting, they're going to be so hard to please. But you've got things like for example Eldercare down at Franklin, water features, beautiful fountains, gardens, gorgeous you know colours with the interior designs, no smelly dark nasty sort of images; diversional therapies. They're required to have x amount of diversional therapy per resident. They're accreditation is based on being audited and that can happen any time. So I think it really has transformed, probably in the last five, ten years.

So you're saying because you would know the providers in this area.

Well I've asked if I could book in, yeah.

So, I wouldn't mind going to Abbeyfield.

Laughs

So as far as you know people don't share rooms like they used to. It used to be four to a room sometimes, things like that. And just a wardrobe and a dressing table, not even a pot plant just a photo.

No there's a big emphasis on making that little space their home, so bringing in personal items I've been to very few shared rooms and the focus seems to be on bringing in special things like cabinets and their china and the recliner chair and the tellie and the stereo.

Mmm.

Quite nice.

So probably the community perceptions as mine as reflected in mine, of what a nursing home is like, haven't caught up yet.

Yeah and there is different standards of course, different ones, there's still some older ones. And you know they're not as nice as the revamped.

The purpose, recently purpose designed, purpose built ones like [name of aged care facility deleted] I suppose.

Mmm.

Not [name of aged care facility deleted], what's it called, that one out at New Norfolk.

[name of aged care facility deleted].

[Name of aged care facility deleted]

Yeah

In what ways could current housing provision be improved so that it better meets older people's needs and the needs of single older women in particular?

I think as far as, from anecdotal feedback, the fact that they're able to have good access so getting in and out isn't an issue; that they feel secure; that not just access in, in their own environment so community access so things like how the Metro buses have, have that little shh, and go down lower so there's not that big step from the curb to the bus, is, is like really big. It doesn't seem much but it means that they can now get on the bus.

Without having someone help them on.

Yeah. Yeah. Or feeling scared that they're going to fall. What else? Programs like the Community Aged Care Packages where they're providing a range of services and they're acknowledging things like community access and social participation as part of their brief and that they're required to provide support for people. There's a lot more clubs around, day centres, which are supported clubs where they get a hot meal and they get picked up and dropped off and they do a variety of things and you've got people going to day centres who unfortunately they suffer from dementia or other purpose ones like Headway but you've also got mainstream day centres where they're just a bunch of lonely older people. They do bus trips. They go away for a weekend, you know; have guest speakers. They're really quite active, which is great. Things like Probus in Tasmania's really blown out of the water. So that's that age group I think where they're still out and about and independent but seeking that company in a non-confined way, so there's no duty attached to it where you've got to go and sell raffle tickets or, or got to go and do community time things.

So is that professional and businesswomen, Probus?

That's Soroptimists. Probus is Professional Retired something, something. My Mum's in Probus but Soroptimists is women.

Mmm.

What key changes can you see happening in older people's housing in the future?

Yeah well from my point of view I'd like to see communities where only older people are there and that it's purpose built for them so you're not getting single mums and you know a range of other people, who are fine in their own right, but you're catering to older people, older women so you're meeting their needs. And you may well take the same tack with other special groups where you'd support single mums and maybe have a crèche and different sort of support things happening. But ...

You're saying about so you could economically provide the services for someone, whatever it may be?

Yes but also addressing things like access and vulnerability; that they know who their neighbours are. That they'll keep a watch out for each other, support each other. There is some independent living units attached to nursing homes or church ones that aren't attached to anything but a purpose there and they seem to work really well.

So you know. You've been there and you've seen it.

Yeah and they talk about oh I went and saw Daisy because her blind wasn't up and she always puts her blind up by nine o'clock and I went and found her and she'd had a fall.

Mmm.

They've got all these systems set up to support each other and they're just little things like that but the fact is they might have saved a life rather than sitting in the middle of winter with hypothermia and that sort of thing.

Yeah.

Also social aspects, one particular place has got this little gazebo and they do a little veggie garden and it's raised, raised gardens and they get out and have a little chirp around the veggies and the flowers and it's really important.

So where's that one?

Down at [name of suburb deleted].

Mmm. [name of suburb deleted]. Is it [name of church deleted] or is it [name of aged care provider deleted]?

No it's you've just gone past the BP petrol station and you've got the flats on the left. It might be [name of retirement village deleted].

Oh, [name of retirement village deleted]. So they're down there as well because they're in [name of suburb deleted] aren't they?

There's little hot spots everywhere.

Yeah, yeah. No doubt we're getting more and more.

Well I like to see the purpose built.

What key changes can you see happening in older people's housing in the future?

Well the fact that we're living longer means they're going to have to address issues that are new because you're having more people. I think people, particularly like Baby Boomers as the next age group comes up, they'll have higher expectations and they're more savvy to things like political pressure but there'll be a lot more proactive stuff happening with people rather than them just being complacent and sitting back they'll be actually agitating for what they believe is adequate housing, adequate circumstances.

Mmm.

I think that'll be hard for the government.

[Laughs.] Yes, so I was thinking when you say they I was thinking do you mean government because you said you don't think the government can do everything.

Well I think yeah I think the government, I think well but also the community so whereas you know might rent out a dingy old flat, I think people, the landlord will find it harder to find people who accept a lower standard and maybe put up with things not being right as the years go on because of people's expectations and I think that the next group will be more empowered.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Although affordability will be an issue won't it, I mean if there are affordability issues the poorest will be forced into the lower standard of housing.

Yeah. Well ... maybe it'll work the other way.

It would be nice wouldn't it to have a utopian future where we had good housing that yeah was suited to older people. It would be I think a range of different things for a whole lot of different needs, tastes and you know, pockets.

Yeah.

Sizes of pockets; and, this is a concluding question I've added, what does growing older mean to you?

Having more time, sleeping in. [Laughs.]

So you're talking about retiring, then?

Yes.

If you were older and you retire.

Yeah. Mmm. I think I'll be about ninety.

When you retire?

Yeah, when I can afford to retire.

Yeah, yes, it's like me.

The chance to get back to the community too, the chance to take a breath and see how everything's working and just taking that time to smell the roses.

Mmm.

I'm pushed for time all the time.

Mmm. So time's really important to you, if you could have some more, yeah

And family. Grandchildren.

So how old are you?

Forty-five.

Do you have grandchildren yet?

No, but growing older that'd be something I'd really enjoy.

You anticipate having grandchildren?

Oh hopefully lots of them. Love them.

[Conversation deleted.]

Worker 7

So firstly I'd like you to tell me some details about your work background such as previous training you may have had and length of time you've been working in this area.

Ok. I started here back in 1996.

Mmm.

So, I've been in, I've got a banking background.

Oh.

So I was in the [name deleted] Bank for about 21 years; got to management level and, then my wife and I had a break and we went into a small business.

Mmm.

For about six or seven years and then this job opportunity came up, so ... I always had a bit of a heart for the aged.

Mmm.

So it was, there were a couple of people that I knew that were doing this sort of thing. So that sort of led me to come into here.

[Replaces battery.] I know other people with a banking background who seem to come up against housing issues for older people and become knowledgeable about that area.

Yes, yes, yes.

So that was part of your background?

Yes, I suppose I've always had a bit of rapport with older people and I suppose that led me to come into this, yeah.

[Adjusting battery again.] So you said you did have, you had a lot to do with older people in your work. Did you say in the bank?

In the bank yes, yeah. And I always felt I had a rapport with older people so that sort of... I mean the idea of being in aged care sort of appealed to me a bit, you know that ...

Mmm.

I seemed to get on with older people reasonably well and because I had administration skills with the bank this type of position sort of fitted that criteria I suppose.

Yeah. Yes so you need a range of skills.

Yeah.

Especially financial management.

Yeah, yeah.

Mmm.

So and it [aged care] was the industry of the future. [Laughs.]

Oh, so you knew that when you came into it?

Yeah, we knew sort of, things were going to happen in aged care, so.

Mmh. Yeah so how did you become aware of that?

Just I think by er you know the politicians talking about it and that type of thing, you know.

Mmm.

I didn't have a first hand knowledge of an aged care facility where you sort of ... You know exactly that, you know, what was going to happen, but you know I had a general feel that ...

Mmm.

A chap that came from our church that I went to see about possibilities, he sort of shared with me a little bit about his experience with aged care and he'd been in it six or seven years I suppose.

Mmm.

And just shared a little bit about the trends and what was going to happen, so.

So you could see it was an area where there was going to be secure employment in the future.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

And so this organisation must have ... Has it ... It's grown a bit in that time.

Well yes it's ah, since I came in we had [name of retirement village deleted] which was about 34 beds then and we had 25 independent units, at [names of retirement units deleted] and three units over here at the [name deleted] site. And since then we've added [name deleted] Street. And we've added [name of town deleted], ah, units at [name of aged care facility deleted]. So it's virtually, well we've now got 52 units as against 25 so that's doubled.

Mmm.

And the number of beds has almost doubled, so ...

Mmm, and in a bit under ten years.

Yeah, yeah.

So they're hostel beds?

Yeah.

Yeah, and so what are the key policies of your organisation in relation to housing provision for older people?

[Phone rings.] *Housing provision, well I suppose the mission of the organisation is providing security and dignity in a supportive Christian environment.*

Mmm.

For people entrusted in our care.

Mmm.

I needed to have that just in case.

Mmm.

I think we are very much committed to community and the unit sites that we have, particularly at [name of retirement units deleted], were started by the early pioneers of the organisation. And I suppose their concept was building small unit developments of ten, around ten units.

Mmm.

And having all older people in there so that they could support one another.

Mmm.

And, and I suppose that it came originally out of [name deleted] Church, the passion for this sort of work.

Mmm.

And, out of the need I think that they felt when all the, the [name deleted] community I suppose, which was the prominent part of that ...

Mmm.

When they get into their older years what's going to happen to them. And that was a bit of the passion to develop aged care to meet those needs.

Mmm.

Because most of that, of that community moved to Australia in the late forties, mid fifties.

Mmm.

I think that was the way it all started. So community is very important, where not necessarily services are taken to the people there because that wasn't the concept of government then.

Mmm.

But it was more to do with providing accommodation where they could be all together and support one another.

Mmm.

So that's very important, aahh ...

So there was no intention to have a very large complex. Like some retirement villages are very large.

No. I, I think even with [name of aged care facility deleted] and, and more recently, [name of aged care facility deleted], it's been ... having all the units and the hostel on the one site is certainly a benefit for [name of place deleted].

Mmm.

But I think the organisation feels that once you start going into bigger developments, you know i.e. 60 to 100 beds for a hostel and 50 plus units, you're starting to get into an area where it can become institutionalised.

Mmm.

And lose it's ah, [pause] lose it's to a degree it's community flow and I think that's been the benefit of you know, say [name deleted] Street in [name of suburb deleted] where we've only got six or seven units and those other smaller sites that it's more closely knit, rather than ... But [name of town deleted], [name of town deleted] units has become that anyway, even though there's 21 units there.

Mmm, and there's going to be some more.

There's going to be some more.

Mmm, but it's actually in different ...

Yeah.

Little groups anyway.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, but they're very, they're very supportive of one another down there and the community in general is, is a lot different to the community here. It's a bit unique in that way, so they all know, they all know each other but they, a lot of them know each other, related and so forth so it's, yeah it's a bit unique in that. What else?

Well, what do you regard as the most pressing issues in relation to older people's housing at the present time?

I suppose I see the major dilemma is, this push for people and it's not necessarily a push but there, there is a political push for people to stay in their home.

Mmm.

As long as they can.

Mmm.

And in a way older people want to continue that independence and stay in their home as long as they can.

Mmm.

And the government is saying ... They're encouraging people in that, and ... but there's a dilemma because it gets to certain stages where, if they don't have services coming in they become frailer and frailer and, they can't access services because there are not enough available, and inevitably it's best, as far as aged care I know we're talking independent units and aged care as far as our organisation goes, but as far as aged care goes the longer they leave it to come in the more difficult it is for them to settle and sometimes they come in when they're hospitalised or they're They've got some disability whether it be Alzheimers or dementia or whatever.

Mmm.

And they don't then ... they're not really able to really enjoy the lifestyle of the community.

Mmm.

As much. When I first come here there was a couple of people that I went to see in their homes about coming into the hostel and they had prepared themselves and they were ready to come and looking forward to come, coming and one of those ladies is still here now and ah, still goes for her walks every morning and I think the fact that she had that positive attitude sort of made it much easier and she was able to enjoy the lifestyle a lot more.

Yeah, and you're saying also in terms of her health I think aren't you.

Yeah.

In that ...

Yeah

Because it wasn't such a difficult adjustment

Mmm

That she was able to ...

Yeah.

Settle into a, a lifestyle that supported her health.

That's right yeah, yeah and I, I think that the dilemma today is that because now the government's encouraging people to stay in their home longer it will get to a stage where they've either had a fall; they've broken a hip or they've or their state of mind has deteriorated to such an extent that when they come to this sort of set up it's almost high nursing type of care.

Mmm, so I think what you're saying is, this form of housing, if people can make the move and the adjustment at the right time.

Yeah.

Is better placed to support ageing well.

Yes, yeah.

Yeah, you know than if it's a problem,

Yes

Emergency sort of response.

Yes.

Mmm.

And I suppose one of the other pressing issues I see that's evolving, it's very much a vulnerable sector in society and, feeling safe and secure is an issue.

Mmm.

Now.

Yeah, and so in what ways do you see older people as being vulnerable?

I just think that the experience is that they need, to be in an environment where they are, they feel safe.

Mmm.

Whether that's by the type of accommodation, the layout the, the, little things like grab rails in the bathrooms and all that sort of stuff, and emergency support that if they're in a home or a unit just in the general community, unless they've got really good neighbours and support.

Mmm

Mmm.

Or family nearby.

Yeah, yeah, they're exposed to the risks of society and er falling and all those sorts of issues, yeah.

Mmm, so in risks from society you mean things like, you mean things like burglary...

Yes, yes.

Or harassment ...

Yeah.

Mmm.

Yeah, yeah, yeh.

Mmm. And what in, in your view are the key housing needs of older people, bearing in mind the needs of single older women in particular? I know you've just talked about the need for security but I suppose yeah, more in terms then of the, the design of the housing and the location of the housing.

Um ...

That's the other side of it anyway.

Yeah.

How can housing address those vulnerability issues?

I think, living in community around them; making available support services. As much as possible having level access. I know that's difficult but ...

Mmm

Having accommodation where they can get, have that ease of access into, just with reducing the risk factors to their well being.

Mmm, yeah.

Bearing in mind they're becoming more frailer.

Mmm.

You know, and their health. The more you can reduce the risks, the better they are to cope.

Mmm, so some would have to seek out an environment like this if they had a disability because, they wouldn't be able to manage in their home any more.

Yeah.

But I mean for ease of lifestyle are you saying not only for people with a disability, that this would be beneficial or ...

Yeah, look the number of people who come to me and say that Mum and Dad just can't afford to stay in that home at the moment because there's steps.

Mmm.

All those sorts of issues; that they're struggling to get up and down steps. Dad's virtually confined to indoors because he can't go down the steps.

Mmm.

And the wandering aspects and all that, where if it's a single, if it's a single person living in the accommodation that's, family's constantly frustrated, not frustrated but worried about where they are and ...

Mmm, so you're talking about someone with early stages of dementia then?

Yeah, yes, yes.

So there are, some people come here for that reason.

Yes, yes, yes.

Mmm, but, so what happens here if someone wanders?

Generally it's, it's the early stages of wandering and within the community up here we, we have some alarm systems to monitor them if they go down, if they happen to walk down the driveway there's an alarm across the drive.

Mmm.

And we can monitor their safety but still give them the freedom to move around the facility.

Mmm.

Er, which is important. Now that's completely different to say the [name of aged care facility deleted] scenario where we have a secure dementia wing.

Yeah, yes so this is, so here you actually have ... we're talking about low care.

Yes.

But it's a completely different set-up.

Yes, yes.

It's more like an independent unit.

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, but you monitor it electronically.

Yes.

Yeah, mmm.

For those that are assessed as being at risk, yeah.

Mmm.

Yeah.

Yeah but you mean. I mean it must be hard to monitor for some and not for others, but you must have had situations then where you have had people who have wandered.

Yes, yes.

And you've been able to ...

Yep, just monitor those individuals.

And so if they, you can stop them and bring them back if that's necessary.

Yes.

So you've not had anyone who's wandered away and got lost then?

[Pause.] *In the eight years we would have had the isolated incident.*

Mmm, yeah.

Yeah and, it's because of the way we monitor them is that it's a, there's an alarm in the driveway.

Mmm.

And, obviously they need a monitoring tag on them and if they happen to; with their dementia they take that tag off ...

Oh so, so the alarm will only pick up the tag.

Yeah, yeah.

So if someone's got a tag you know they have dementia.

Yes, you've got to have something to trigger the alarm.

Like a bracelet or something.

Yes, yes.

Mmm.

So if they take that off ...

Wow.

And the staff aren't aware of that,

Mmm.

That can cause some difficulties, yeah.

Mmm, yeah so it's not a foolproof system.

No, no.

No.

No.

But it gives people more freedom than if they were contained within walls.

Yes.

Mmm, yep.

Ah and even though we don't have the secure wing that [name of aged care facility deleted]'s got, the benefit of here is that they can move around without ... and we've had quite a few with early stages I suppose of dementia.

Mmm.

That have been able to do that you know.

Mmm, yes because I suppose some with early stages of dementia they wouldn't necessarily be disoriented all the time.

No.

But something might happen that they would become ...

Yes.

That they become disoriented.

Yes.

Like ill health ...

Yeah, yeah.

Or you know yeah ...

Sometimes ah, there's some medical condition that they ...

Yeah, yes, yes.

That makes them a little bit disorientated.

Yeah, yeah. I hadn't heard ... I hadn't been aware of that until recently, but I ...

Yeah.

Mmm, yes, my father-in-law.

Mmm.

That happened. And so what do you think older people in general and single older women in particular, want from their housing?

[Pause.] *I think, which I've said already, is to feel secure. But just to have company and people around them, of similar age groups. Yeah. Loneliness I think is a real issue for older people.*

Mmm, some cope with it better than others.

Yeah, yeah.

Mmm.

Yeah. But I think it's a ...

Even when you're coping it's not necessarily a very positive thing to not have contact.

No. Yeah.

Yeah, even if it's

Mmm.

Just seeing someone doing something.

Yeah.

Or saying hullo or ...

Yeah. I think, like we have a very brief application form for our unit people and that, there's, there's a statement in it why you want to come ...

Yeah.

And most of the reasons for wanting to come into this sort of accommodation, some, part of it's cost obviously, but the other things, there's loneliness, company, security.

Mmm, and so, and, and some of them would have a broken hip or something like that would need the level access.

Yeah, yeah.

But when you say cost, so they would find it more affordable to come here?

Because we are, because we're a not for profit organisation we, I think we provide very affordable accommodation.

Mmm.

Since we've been building two bedroom units it's been pretty well that we've needed to charge the ingoing accommodation bond style of entry.

Mmm.

But then we charge a very modest rental.

Mmm.

For just the day to day maintenance and er rates and insurance and so on.

Mmm.

So it's been ... I think compared some areas, I think we're fairly moderate in that area.

Mmm.

But we've also got the one-bedroom units down at [name of retirement units deleted], which are, obviously they're ageing units, but they're modernised inside and we've kept them up to a good standard.

Mmm.

And we've been able to offer them on a rental basis, you know, for those who maybe can't afford to pay bonds, yeah.

Mmm.

It's a bit harder to offer the two-bedroom units because we are still under the influence of the original capital cost, so ...

Yeah.

Yeah, but, unless ... Well we've had three community housing units at [name of town deleted] which has enabled three people to, to rent, yeah.

Yeah, mmm and so with the capital cost, I mean does the ingoing cover the capital cost?

Off ... I'd have to say no, yeah.

I wouldn't have thought it would, yeah.

No, no.

But there's a loan as well?

I suppose the organisation's absorbed that

Mmm.

In the, like the cost of the land at [name of town deleted] which is the more recent one, and the architect's fees.

Mmm.

And the first stage of development there. I think the organisation's bore a fair cost component there to get [name of town deleted] up and running.

Mmm.

Ah, and as each stage has been developed the, the ingoing cost has gone up a bit, but we've never added on the cost of the land or the architect fees or the infrastructure.

Mmm.

It's really been ... That's been absorbed by the organisation.

Mmm.

So that's why I think we've been able to ...

Yeah, so over the longer term it will all come back into gear.

Yeah, yeah.

But not straight away.

Yeah.

Not just on the ingoing.

Like we, back in '99 we built the [name deleted] units. *There were six there. Now the people that move into them again got a reasonable pricing, but the six units there cost us a bit over \$100,000 each at that stage.*

Mmm.

But now those units are worth you know, \$200,000 plus so we've picked up the capital gain I suppose. So we've, we've exposed our financial aspects from uh, a balance sheet at the early stage of building it, but in the long term you know, we're still fairly okay in that respect.

Mmm, in terms of the value of the assets that you hold.

Yes, yeah, yes, yeah.

And, just thinking about housing provision generally, how well do you think current housing provision caters for older people's housing needs, and single older women in particular?

For our organisation?

No I mean just the current housing that's available, in the market or whatever.

I think the industry in general is getting better at providing. They're more in tune with what people are needing.

Do you think that the supply meets the demand?

[Pause.] *I'd have to say no because we've got a waiting list [laughs]. Yeah, I think, like there's huge unit developments happening around [name of suburb deleted] for instance.*

Mmm.

But I don't think they're being built to the specific needs of older people necessarily.

Mmm, so there's medium density units being built?

Yeah.

Mmm.

Yeah and we keep hearing of more unit developments but I think they're still not in tune with... If, if their market is older people, and I think a lot of them might fall onto retirees and that sort of thing, I don't think they're being built considering the safety issues and ...

Mmm, so this is, you are talking about private developers who are building units?

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, and are they thinking of community building as well.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I mean, I think, don't know. I haven't looked at them but, of the, like the stratum title units that I'm aware of they're, due to the design of them there often seemed to be you know huge potential for conflicts over cars and parking and that sort of thing.

Mmm-mmm.

Mmm, yeah, *[laughs]* not enough space, not enough, yeah ...

That's right, yeah. The [name of aged care facility deleted] units were built quite spacious.

Mmm.

Really because we felt if we really wanted a good product for that community who were coming from rural type areas that they would appreciate having that space and being able to have a family member to stay over.

Mmm.

And even though some people think, oh it should be only for married couples, I still think that it's suitable for single people, for that very reason.

Mmm.

And I think in the future, there's going to be a ... With Baby Boomers [laughs] and that coming through, I think there's going to be a need for that extra space because we'll want our computer and all that sort of thing.

Yes, well it's already happening.

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, so you're saying that under the old guidelines a two-bedroom place would have been for a couple, are you saying?

Yeah, yeah.

Um ...

Yes, we identified fairly early, not long after I came that the one-bedroom units at [name of retirement units deleted] would not meet the future needs, even though we've had struggles at times to fill those units. We've advertised two or three times.

That's because what, there isn't ... People would prefer not to have a one-bedroom?

Most of them on the waiting list ... Not many people on the waiting list, but every time we advertise we've had heaps of enquiries, so and there's a, there is a growing waiting list now even though there's not as much as the two-bedroom units.

Mmm, because there's such a huge pressure on the housing market in general.

Yeah.

And on rental housing.

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, so mmm.

Mmm.

I think that a lot of people providing retirement units are feeling that pressure now.

Yeah.

Because older people have fewer options.

Mmm, mmm.

Just like everyone else has fewer options [laughs].

Yeah, yeah.

Yes, so and what sorts of housing do you think works well for older people then, for single older women in particular? It seems repetitive I know but it seems to bring up different answers. You said, I mean I think you were talking about well designed congregate housing, in terms of the policy of this organisation.

Yeah, yeah, community type housing obviously we're they're together but independent living. I'm not so certain, like our, our chairman of our board, one of the founding members, [name deleted].

Mmm.

[Founding member's name deleted] *had this concept of little blocks of units in different localities.*

Mmm.

They really need a real focus on access to services, particularly transport.

Mmm.

Transport's a big issue.

So you're saying some of your housing doesn't cater as well for that as it might?

Well [name of retirement units deleted] down here, it's not near shops but there's a bus that goes past.

And is that a good bus service?

Yeah, yeah, there's the bus service there and they've got the walk to the beach, and nice and level. It's very flat. [Name of retirement units deleted] a different set-up. They're, they're on a bit of a slope. There's a bit of a slope but they're just a stone's throw to [name deleted] shopping centre.

Mmm.

But, so access to services is important but if you can; [name of founding member deleted]'s concept was to build little community houses where everyone would be supportive of one another.

Mmm.

And I think there's a lot of merit in that because they're all similar ages. They take ownership of each other.

Mmm.

And the support is there. It's rare ... from time to time we've had a bit of a grizzle, one not getting on with the other.

Mmm.

But it's been rare. It's really rare.

But I mean you'd have to expect that.

That's right.

If people who don't know each other well and have to live closely together.

Yeah, yeah.

Sometimes it's just part of learning to get to know each other and live with each other, isn't it.

Mmm.

That conflicts happen.

Mmm and I think independent units are very, very appealing, like the [name of town deleted] development, to people rather than them being in blocks.

Mmm.

Which used to be the old style, and not too crammed up. They just need to be able to just have that space around them.

Mmm, yeah, because there are some even now they're being built aren't they, like Village Life, I think where don't, they don't have a lot of space.

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, it's all quite ... To make it low cost I guess.

Yeah but I do ... See, some of the trends that I've seen with say [name of retirement units deleted] and the first eight units that were built at [name of town deleted].

Mmm.

Like, our Association will maintain gardens to the extent ... To the common areas, and we ask the residents to maintain their own little garden plots.

Mmm.

Now, it's been three, three and a half years I think since we built the first eight at [name of town deleted] and I think it'll be five years at [name of retirement units deleted]. When they first started they were all very active, physically.

Mmm.

And they did their own gardens and they filled them up and you can see that in the first eight units at [name of town deleted]. But now we can see the change; the, the ageing process I suppose and we can see the need that we've got to step in and do that, gardens.

Mmm.

Unless there's family that will do it for those people in those first eight units, and at [name of retirement units deleted] to a degree. They're still doing a fair bit themselves. But you can see the change in the ageing, compared now to the last eight we've just built at [name of town deleted] where they're still developing the gardens but they're out there every day doing it.

Mmm.

Whereas the first eight people that moved in, into the first eight units aren't moving as fast as they were.

Mmm.

Obviously.

Because you're talking about people aren't you ... that are in quite advanced age.

Yes.

You're talking about people in their eighties or ...

Yeah.

Even their nineties.

Yeah, yeah.

Mmm.

Yeah, some of them were in their 70s when they moved in but, so the concept of providing accommodation that they can continue to stay in there is helped by the fact that we can help them with their gardens and stuff.

Mmm.

When they get to a stage they can't do it themselves.

And so does the maintenance charge adequately cover that? I mean did you think that through, I mean or ...

I think based on the fact that we probably do very little in the first three or four years, I think it does.

Yeah, so you ... There's a bank balance there.

Yeah.

That hopefully will ...

There's resources there.

Yeah.

So.

And with the turnover of residents I suppose you won't always have everyone needing to have the garden done.

That's right, yeah, yeah.

Yeah, and I suppose there's also ways to put in lower maintenance gardens.

Yeah, yeah.

Mmm, rather than perennials.

Mmm.

Mmm. And, mmm, yeah these questions are amazingly repetitive aren't they. [Laughs.]

[Laughs.]

Yes, I think we've talked about a lot of these things. I mean we're talking about how current housing provision can be improved and based on your experience, I mean, you're seeing that a lot of housing that is coming on the market now that potentially you know might be for an older market, has a lot of room for improvement.

Mmm, mmm.

Um.

Yes, certainly. They're built for the wrong reasons though. They're built as a, whether it's a private developer or whatever, they're built to make money out of it, necessarily without considering the issues. If the market is older people or retirees, they haven't really done their homework.

And, they tend don't they I think, to, to go for two storey.

Yes.

And I suppose that means.

Yes.

They can fit more on the block.

That's right, yeah,

In fact ...

Yeah.

It's good to have everything level and it's also good to have manoeverable space.

Mmm.

Both for cars ...

Yeah.

And also for, just for pathways that can be level because sometimes it takes a bit of space to get them level.

That's right, yeah.

Yeah and, certainly that's something somebody else told me who, who's been in the aged care policy area was, when older people are still driving that it makes it a lot easier for them if the turning circles and the parking spaces are just that bit more roomy.

Yeah, yeah.

So did you allow for that at [name of town deleted] Village? Because it does seem, I mean I've ... Or is it just to minimum standards or a bit better than minimum standards? Or did you ...

Yeah, yeah. I think we could, we can do it better. Yeah. I think we can do it better.

Mmm, so you feel you've learnt something from [name of town deleted] Village.

Yes, if we were to be building a new development. But obviously the more space you put around in, into that infrastructure, it's more costly of course.

Yeah.

But I think, I would hope that if we build a new development ... Well, we're adding more units at [name of town deleted] and I don't see that we're really changing a lot there, but, in the way of turning circles and that sort of stuff but, in this next lot of three to five units that we build, but I think if we had a new site and everything, we might have to look at that.

In turn though, it's reasonably generous, yeah.

I think, I mean, compared to Vaocluse it's er ...

Yeah.

Incredibly spacious isn't it.

Yeah.

Because it's all so close cramped there.

Mmm.

And I don't think there's any real option, not much of an option for having a car. I mean I suppose people must, some people must have cars.

Yeah, yeah.

But I don't know where they park them.

No.

I'm trying to picture it.

But we put the carports in and you know, we found in a couple of areas, you know the front of the carports had poles right at the front you see and it was very hard being able to turn in, particularly for older people whose judgement and all that is a lot ...

Mmm, so have you noticed or have some of them told you that they're finding it hard?

Yeah, a couple told us and we, we actually moved the poles in a bit for them, yeah, and it doesn't ...

I can't quite picture what the problem was with that, you mean that as they turned in the poles on the edge, they were likely to hit against them.

Hit them, yeah.

But once you moved them in.

Yeah.

By that they were more straight and they could go, yeah.

Yeah, because if you're coming in, if you're turning off a roadway ... and it was, it happened to be on a bend, just before [name of resident who was interviewed deleted]'s unit, you turn around and come in the bend and you've got to go into these car parks.

Oh, yes.

The best way was to really go and turn around and come back and then pull in that way, but the residents said no, I want to pull in that way and because the poles were right at the front the angle made it difficult to get enough space to pull in, and ...

But you were able to move the poles back, you actually did.

We moved the poles back about a meter and I think that solved the problem.

Oh.

Yeah, but ... So there's little ... There's always little design ... We've changed the interior of the last lot of units significantly ...

[Name of resident who was interviewed deleted]'s is very nice.

Yes, very.

Do you mean ... That's the second lot?

That was the second lot.

But now you've changed it.

The third lot we've put, a higher wall oven in. We've put a wall oven in instead of a stove.

Mmm

And a hot plate so that the bending, getting stuff out of the oven, is, that's sort of resolved. So there's little things in the kitchen that we've changed too.

But the general layout is ...

Still the same, yeah.

Mmm.

The bathroom's we've, we now have an option there where you can have a sliding door into the bathroom off the laundry, a little area there.

So that gives more room in the bathroom.

Yeah, we've taken it out in some of the bathrooms so that you walk straight in. You're off the laundry area there, then and you've got the open bathroom you see and it's just a bit more spacious if you've got a wheelchair or...

Oh, so you don't have the walls.

Yeah, between the laundry and the bathroom, yeah.

And what about having you know, baths, no baths option? Is that ...

We've had one resident that requested a bath.

Yeah, most older people don't want them I guess.

No.

Because they can't get in and out.

Yeah and I don't think that bath is used very much.

Mmm.

But they requested it because of the ... an existing medical condition to do with a knee. They needed to have a bath for that and, that was still too difficult to get in and out.

Mmm. And so does the floor plan you've got readily accommodate a bath or is it problematic fitting a bath in that?

It makes it more difficult, yeah.

And everything else is sort of ...

Yeah.

... crammed up a bit.

You've got to really increase the size of the bathroom to be able to put that in there.

So you did have to do that?

Yeah, for that one, yeah.

Mmm, mmm, that's the advantage of buying off the plan isn't it.

Yeah, yeah.

And so what, what key changes can you say you're aware that in the, this type of housing provision, there are changes happening and so what are the key changes you can see happening in older people's housing in the future?

Ah ...

Because I'm not so sure that we're going to get more space, for one thing. I mean it would be a good thing wouldn't it.

Yes, yes.

But because of land prices and, and property values and everything.

Mmm, see things happening? Well I suppose I'm saying that there's going to be greater expectation.

Mmm.

Because of the society that'll be moving into aged care.

Mmm.

I think there's going to be a greater expectation on providers. Affordability's going to be an issue. Access to medical attention. The hospital scene is ... For our, for our aged care facility the hospital and the whole [sigh] medical profession is, is, becoming more and more frustrating because, like we have people that are here that'll go and have a fall and er a hip redone and within a couple of days they're back here and we're meant to be virtually a mini hospital.

Mmm.

Now if people are going to be asked to stay in their homes longer and the hospital scene isn't going to change, which it would be hard to see it changing, when they need urgent medical attention like that, and some aren't even getting it.

Mmm.

And they're meant to go back and live in their own home.

Mmm.

So unless there's really good family support, and even that's a struggle because usually the children are working two jobs or ...

Mmm.

Or whatever, so, I think the government's got a fairly big problem, to be able to resource these things and we don't provide, to be quite frank we don't get any government support to build these facilities at all, other than the three units we had from Community Housing.

Mmm.

The hostel down there we get government funding for the care of the residents, the ongoing care but we've had no capital funding to help us build.

Mmm.

It all is very much user pays now.

So it's got to come from the charges on the residents?

Yeah.

Mmm.

Yeah.

But you then needed a capacity to borrow in order to build it.

Yes, yes.

Or to have the resources there to build it.

Yeah.

And then you can recoup the costs from the charges.

That's right, yeah.

It's a bit. It's tough isn't it.

Yeah, yeah. It's really tough.

Yeah.

So affordability is going to be an issue and being able to build, build to a budget. It's going to be ...

Yeah, so do you think there's more research that can be done on affordable building methods and designs that reduce the costs?

I do hear on the mainland where places are being built, where they, you know they have shared bathrooms not in their room but they actually go to another ...

Mmm.

A community bathroom. It's not ... This is for aged care of course. But it's certainly not ideal.

Mmm.

And people I don't know whether they'd be overly accepting of that.

Mmm, so at [name of town deleted], are there separate bathrooms for all the residents?

Yes, yeah.

In the hostel?

Yeah.

Mmm, yes because it's sort of, it's not what people are used to is it?

No.

And I think when you're feeling unwell and vulnerable probably more so ...

Mmm.

You would, yeah.

So I don't know whether I see things happening in that area but I think the frustrations of the hospitals, uh seeing the, the government's desire to, obviously it's financial desire to have them stay in their home longer. It's not because they are thinking older people don't want to move into care and all that, all those reasons. It's purely because of the impact of the cost on them [laughs].

Mmm.

The affordability. You know, people that haven't provided for their retirement for whatever reasons or don't have resources, access for them's going to be limited.

Because of this, the need for people to pay for the, accommodation side?

Yeah, yeah.

Mmm, yeah and so when you build your next one I mean it would be a bit of a dilemma as to where to, if you were going to continue on with the principles of [name of town deleted].

Yeah.

And I think you know, clearly if people see that there'll be an interest in it won't there but ...

Mmm-mmm.

You would be wanting to look for, land where you could still do that in an affordable way which ... Are you going to find land near enough to transport and services, near to services?

Yes, yeah.

To be able to do it affordably? So it may be a poss ... you know that these sort of things won't be possible.

Mmm-mmm.

I don't know.

Having ... and we've been looking for more land.

Mmm.

You know and, but having something, particularly in [name of suburb deleted], having something close to [name of suburb deleted] to build more units and stuff like that has been on our agenda now for three or four years because we've got a huge waiting list, you know.

And, there's a lot of land here but most of it seems to be being developed now.

Yes, yeah.

But did you not find any of that suitable? Of what was available? Or was it just, was it developed into blocks or ...

We missed out on a block close to [name deleted] shopping centre which would have been good, but a lot of the other things, land we looked at we felt that we didn't get, we just didn't feel it was suitable purely because of access to services and medical, medical practitioners and ...

Mmm, so [name of town deleted] is better placed in that way?

Not, not really but it's a different, it's a different set-up because it's a community type of facility and we've had to and even though it's sometimes still a struggle with the doctors because they haven't even got a doctor in [name of town deleted].

Oh.

And the doctor from [name of town deleted] comes up. So it's a bit of a battle. It's worked all right so far.

Mmm, so there's a shortage of GPs.

Yes, yeah.

Mmm.

Yeah. But I was going to say something about the land options. We looked at some land er out at the [name deleted] Road there at one stage. I'm not sure that's where Village Life are, might be.

Mmm.

But it was very elevated. It would have copped a lot of wind.

Mmm, what, so where in [name deleted] Road?

Oh, on the highway out towards [name of town deleted], there was some land there.

Mmm-mmm.

But we felt it would've ... We'd have had to put some decent screening around it to protect it you know.

Mmm.

And yet it was so far away from services.

You'd have to rely on services in [name of town deleted].

Mmm.

Mmm.

One of the key things that the industry doesn't seem to be able to get through is to the councils to make provision.

Yeah.

Yeah, they're holding a lot of land around.

Mmm, so in the future that's something really important that needs to happen isn't it.

Yeah so if that was to happen, and we've had talks with [name deleted] Council about certain spots that we'd like but we just, whilst they're supportive of what we're doing there's no real action to, to bring it about.

So are they more supportive just of mainstream residential developments? Do you think?

Um ...

I mean do you think there's some sort of prejudice against housing for older people?

No. I don't think there's any prejudice. They were very supportive of us with [name of town deleted] you know and they helped us through the processes and everything so.

Mmm.

They were there to help us but when it comes to prioritising land in certain areas that are ideal for aged care we can't seem to get that message. Or they're not proactive in saying, here's this piece of land, we haven't used it ...

[Tape stopped].

Worker 8

Firstly, I'd like to take down some details about your work background, such as any previous training you may have had and the length of time you have been working in this area.

I was Chairman of the Board and I dealt with policy issues.

Mmm.

Businessy [inaudible] things, all that sort of stuff.

Mmm.

The actual on the ground contact with, with, with er, the residents ...

Mmm.

Was, has been fairly minimal.

No, so from you I'm interested in the policy, the policies behind what you did. You know what the objectives were and you know, what you did to support that I guess.

Well I started when I was 39, 40. I'm 72 now so. Ah and while I was mainly concerned at that time, my mother was a widow. She was 66. She was living in a separate house. At that stage there was very little in the way of... Well, well there were nursing homes, if you got old enough.

Mmm-mmm.

You finished up in nursing homes.

Mmm yeah, so you're telling me history now, aren't you.

Well that's ...

Mmm, it's changed.

And a lot of them were capable people; fit women finished up in a nursing home.

Mmm.

Living out their last ten, 20, 30 years.

Mmm, yeah, that's like a death sentence. It's like asking for an early death.

Ah, and I even remember people telling me, okay well yeah, that's where I'll finish up.

Mmm.

Er, but anyway in my Mum's case I think well this is not right. She should be somewhere in the, in the community.

Yeah.

And at that time the federal government was very generous, in that they wanted to create, given the present difficulties ...

Mmm.

Small groups. But not necessarily small groups. We were, we were very fortunate in that we got a fella from [name of aged care provider deleted] to advise us on what we should be doing, what we should be doing. [Name of person deleted], that was him yes; and he said stick to a small community, no more than a dozen.

Mmm.

And ah, we were generous and through our church we had a fellow who had a couple of acres of land at [name of retirement units deleted]. He let us have it for a peppercorn.

Mmm.

Thus we put every dollar we collected and that government gave too, so at that time I was still Chairman or head of the building company, [name deleted], so we decided to go ahead and build the first then units.

Mmm.

And, when we started to the amazing thing was the reluctance of people to, to commit themselves to living in one of those units. We thought it was the best thing since sliced bread and all we had to do was just advertise and people would come flocking to us.

Mmm.

You know, so keen to get in and, there was no response and then, we had a big public meeting in the [name of area deleted] hall, advertised it everywhere. We got quite a number of people there and we told them what we were doing and showed them the plans and everything else. Not one single person. While three of them said, yeah, we think we could be interested.

Mmm.

Anyway again talking with [name of person deleted] and some wise counsel from another person, they said, well you'll find that people are looking for bricks and mortar. Once they see what you're doing they will come. They want to, want to see what it looks like.

Mmm.

So we decided we got enough money, build and we stick on that land three blocks of; two blocks of four and one block of three.

So your company built it? And was that a cheap price?

Well, no, no, normal price.

Just you know, but not for a profit?

Oh yes.

Oh, oh right, because you were a business.

We keep our things separate.

Yes, yes, yes. I've heard people explain that before.

[Laughs.] *I, I must say at this stage I can't even remember but I, I assume it was. I know it was.*

Just a usual ...

Just treated like a normal building contract.

Yeah.

And we started to build and by the time we had the first three units up and under cover all ten units were taken.

Huh-huh, mmm, huh.

Because when they realised, hey this looks good, wow well so ...

Well the ones in [name of street deleted]. They do look good. They look better than the other ones I've seen and that was the sort of thing I was interested in. Is what sort of principles you know you worked to in order to design housing that you felt would create community there.

Oh well, at that time we were allowed ... The, the government gave us two dollars for one dollar but for single persons it had to be. It was not allowed to exceed, exceed a certain size. Doubles could be a bit bigger. Anyway we decided to make them all double rooms.

Mmm.

Although some of them were single people.

Mmm.

At that time we still had, mind you there were couples.

Mmm.

And the average age of people going in to [name of retirement units deleted] at that time was 74.

Mmm.

Considerably younger than what we get today.

Mmm.

Today the average age is more like 80.

Mmm and do you have any idea about why that would be?

Oh, people are just healthier.

Mmm-mmm, mmm.

They live longer and then they say, oh yeah it's too hard.

Huh.

So and not only that. It's also I know at the units in [name of retirement unit complex deleted] which were the first ones built back in 1972 I think and all of them are refurbished. They've all got new kitchens in them. They are now all occupied by single persons so what they've done, inside they've made the bedrooms a bit smaller and created more space but John and I discussed before I left and John's idea was correct, that we had to start long term, start to look at turning them into two-bedroom units.

Mmm.

Because now the expectation of people is as in, yeah, er ...

Reducing the number of them and having them bigger, yeah?

Yes, like well, [name of town deleted] is, is, is the best example of what we see as an ideal ...

Mmm.

Situation. It's a very spacious living area.

Best I've seen, yeah.

A couple of big double bedrooms. Ah, the kitchen designed for older people, actually and the bathroom, everything else and, so that it has evolved from the single bedroom one to the more ...

Mmm.

Opulent.

Well the thinking has changed. I mean I suppose once people were just looking for some sort of place to warehouse older people, as though they'd passed their use by date but er ...

Well they did and we, we looked at for example some of bigger establishments around Hobart and we knew, hang on we've got to get away from this institutional look.

Mmm.

Yeah, people want it and, and also, the advice given by [name of person deleted], try and build near a school.

Mmm.

Where they can hear the kids.

Mmm.

Screaming and yelling and laughing et cetera, et cetera.

Mmm.

Try and be close to a shopping centre where they can walk to the shops, or a library.

Mmm.

Close to public transport; all those things.

Mmm.

And even today it's sad that our local government here too. We were offered a piece of land, two years ago. To build aged care units but it was a left over from somewhere, near the sports centre up on the hill.

Oh yes, yeah.

And we said hang on.

[Laughs.]

And, and yet er ...

Yeah, if they could figure it into their planning and set aside a certain amount of land suitable for older people, level and near services.

And that should have been ... And, and we in fact put it to the Council at the time and said listen, you're putting them in the back blocks.

Mmm.

They are our, our senior citizens. They deserve the best. They should be given the choice pieces of land close to the shopping centre et cetera, et cetera.

Mmm, yeah.

We had, we had an area of land in [name deleted] or [name deleted] Street. There's seven acres there. And we said that's ideal because it's facing North and oh but it can't be. We tried to convince the, the Council.

You couldn't get planning approval? You couldn't get planning approval for it?

No. It's public open space.

Oh, right. Oh, they, you needed to get use of it.

But the point was we said, listen, and in fact there, one of their planners was quite in favour of it. They said look can't we make this a park like environment but just plonk a few dozen units in it, in a park then, you know, in just a few little groups.

Mmm.

It can still be used for all the park et cetera, but and but, yet again like I shouldn't be too critical. They're my ideas and I thought, oh this is ideal really.

Mmm.

It's just down the road from the shopping centre, or up the road I should say. But anyway as I said earlier on, the start off was me being concerned about my Mum and a few other people like that. At that time the average age on our Board was around the 40, 45 mark. We had a couple in their 50s. Oh 39. We had another Board member who was 30 or 33 and we had this concern. Nowadays we try to get people, invite them to come on our Board in their 40s and 50s. Oh, we're too young.

Mmm-mmm.

Attitudes have changed enormously.

Mmm.

Also I think because ... no I don't really know why. I know my kids are concerned for us. They are in their 30s to 40s.

Mmm.

But they also know that they don't have to worry about us because ok ...

You've got the option of ...

Oh well we have.

Some housing, yeah.

We, we can go into other accommodation. At this stage I mean this is far too big for the two of us really but we enjoy it here so why ...

It's nice to have space.

We'd find it hard to leave. [Laughing.]

Yeah.

Well it's er ...

And why leave if you don't have to. [Laughs.]

Oh well, at this stage we don't have to so, we, we've also said ... I've said well by the time I'm 75 we should consider shifting because we, we have always advised and I have been a strong advocate to people, while you're both still fit shift to a place that you know.

Mmm.

Either one of you can be comfortable if one passed away.

Mmm.

And don't wait. You see it so happens, happens so often that people have waited.

Mmm and it's a terrible crisis.

And one of the partner falls away and, and.

And it's all too much, terrible on their health, often and they can die too.

Exactly so, and I said to Judy, and she said well comes the time when you've got to practice what you preach.

[Laughs.] Mmm.

Our kids say, what do you want to shift for. I said well the garden's getting a bit too big and they say oh well, get a gardener.

Mmm.

We wouldn't do that, and ...

And I have been told by someone in a policy area of aged care that he's aware that a lot of couples do that. That especially because often the women, women live longer than the man will make sure they're set up in a place where if he dies, Mum will be ok.

Yeah. Oh I said to Judy, we talked about it last week. I said oh well as far as I'm concerned you don't have to worry about me. If you pass away earlier and I'm the only one, I'll probably live here for another month and I'll just sell out. Get rid of everything and I'll start somewhere else.

Mmm.

You know, it wouldn't be a big thing for me. Oh well it would. I can't even think about it, but I mean that is what I would want to do. I wouldn't want to live here any more.

Yeah.

It's somewhere where we've been living here for nearly 20 years; had a tremendous time together and I wouldn't want to live here any more.

Mmm.

And, but I said in your case it's different, and I want to get to a stage where, hang on, let's find a new place somewhere which is smaller, closer to shops and town and other people.

Mmm.

And she said oh well, can we go into the Jones Building. [Laughing.]

[Laughs.]

[Claps hands, laughing.] *Crikey! So all right, have you got a million bucks to spend?*

[Laughs.]

Yes. [Laughs.] *Ah, so I said, keep that out of your mind. Forget it! But I wouldn't even want to live there anyway, crikey. I tell you what, over the years we, we, we started off for the first ten years building [name of retirement unit complex deleted]; and then we, it's [name of retirement unit complex deleted], the 12 units, also single bedroom units. So by that time we had something like oh, 24 or 26 people, er cared for. Oh more, because of couples and we said well really we should also now start to think about ongoing care. You know that's hostel type accommodation.*

Mmm.

By that time the hostel thing was starting to come in.

So you could continue to look after the people who were now your community?

Yes, that's right. We felt, several of them ... We had an arrangement with, with [name of aged care provider deleted] and I think one or two in town.

Mmm.

But ok ideally we said now we should really start and say ok now if you come into one of our units and you pay your entry deposit, whatever it is, ok, you are being looked after.

Mmm, so you don't have to pay an extra entry?

No that's right. So ...

Because I was aware of that from the lady I was interviewing but I didn't go into any detail about it. Yeah. So I suppose others do that. [Name of private aged care provider deleted] might do that too but it's a lot more expensive.

Well it varies a lot. We, we have always said ... I don't know what it is now but last time when I was there, [name of retirement unit complex deleted] was \$40,000, but we've, we've heard up to \$120,000 quoted by some people. But I don't know er ...

I think it's probably more at [name of private aged care provider deleted] and then the monthly charge is a lot more but I think once you get in there you can go into the nursing home.

Yeah, but ours is a not for profit, [name of private aged care provider deleted] is not.

Yes, yes, yes, yes. I like the not for profit.

Ah, absolutely. We said ok we would ... This is what we ... Well always have done and ok, any donations of course are tax deductible. We have found that when they er ... Over the years we've, we've bought, built additional units. In [name of retirement units deleted] we have six two-bedroom units.

Mmm, so they were the ones you could build from your own resources, so you chose?

Yah, well what happened ... Sorry, let's, let's get back to where I started with [name of retirement units deleted], [name of retirement units deleted]. Then we decided we wanted to get a hostel going so we were, we were fortunate to get that piece of land of course to build it. Ah, we...

So it was adjacent ...

Had an architect's plan done and then we went to the government and said ok well we want to build 24 units.

Mmm.

Then again we had this, the wonderful thing of getting two dollars for every one dollar we could raise.

For the hostel?

Oh yes.

Mmm.

So at that time we only had to get \$15,000 for people to get in.

Mmm.

And ah, but we did find that only having 24 units ah was definitely not, ah, ah feasible.

With the staff?

Yeah, we, we had ...

And the standards and everything ...

We had, we collected enough money to pay the day to day things but there was no insurance or depreciation or any of those things. We were just, you know, hang on we've got to get more units built.

And now the Commonwealth probably wouldn't license anything that small. Is that right, or?

Yeah, we, yeah we finished up with 37 units there. As it is now it's looking after itself. I mean we have a surplus which allows us to do all the things we need to do e, and that's been there now since 989 I think. So that's 11, 16 years.

Mmm. So it was ...

But we also know that the time's coming soon when it will all need to be refurbished.

Yeah so there's an ongoing job there.

Oh ...

Yeah and an ongoing yeah liability, but so, as long ago as that amount of time it was already a substantial organisation.

Oh yes, it grew and grew and grew.

Mmm.

And at that time [name of CEO deleted] sort of came in half way through that and he's been a handy fellow to have and he's got a banking background.

Yeah.

And he took to it like a duck to water.

Mmm.

He had [name of Director of Nursing deleted] as his supervisor, she was a very dedicated ... In fact she only resigned the last, oh 12 months ago.

He mentioned her I think but I didn't know who he was talking about.

Yeah.

So she was in charge of the lot or.

Well she was sort of, always looking after the nursing side of it at the time and she and [CEO's name deleted] just worked like that, marvellous. She taught him a lot and ...

Oh so like she was the Director of Nursing and he was the CEO?

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

He is the CEO.

Oh she was just the supervisor you know really but we don't believe in that of course.

[Laughs.]

Because of the packages.

So it's a non-hierarchical structure?

Well I mean we ... I, I, I've talked to other associations bigger than ours and they're all struggling with money and you know how do you make ends meet. They've got a Director of Nursing, a Director of... They've got four or five Directors I mean, a Chief Executive and they've all got big packages, with cars, all this sort of stuff and, and then they wonder why they can't make ends meet.

Mmm.

Because it's you know, you know that's far too big. This empire building goes on you know.

So the emphasis is wrong.

Mmm.

It's not on the objectives of the organisation?

Now we've, we've always run it very well. We need to adequately man it and adequately supervise it.

Mmm.

But let's avoid the empire building.

Just do what's necessary.

Exactly and have a lean, a lean structure ah, mind you then again we also have to be careful that we do pay adequate, you know, for people.

Mmm, yeah, award rates.

Oh yes.

Appropriate to their responsibilities.

And above award rates in most cases so yeah, there's no problem there.

Well you couldn't not, but it may change soon. [Laughs.]

Then we found after we had [name of retirement unit complex deleted] built and we had a continuing like waiting list er around 20 to 30 people ...

Mmm.

Who want to come in. Even now for [name of retirement village deleted] too we have a waiting list of twenty-two at the moment, but then we realised before we started [name of retirement village deleted], to build up our, well more and more people were asking us for accommodation, group accommodation, small communities, but two bedrooms.

Mmm.

And I remember going to [name of shopping centre deleted], one of them, and, and off [name deleted] Street there was this subdivision. There were six, ten units being built and the builders had built the first four.

Mmm.

On spec, and they, and they'd sold them but then it dried up.

Mmm.

But the other six, the slabs had been poured and they'd been lying there for six months, or whatever it was.

And you had a waiting list.

No we, no we, no we didn't have one but we knew that people wanted to come.

Mmm.

So, I said to [name of CEP deleted] listen you've got to go and talk with these builders. Ah I, I think they've got a bowl of money for this development. I think they're stuck.

Mmm.

I think they'd like to have it finished.

Mmm.

And all of these things together, we can, we can make them an offer that they can't refuse.

Mmm, and you're a good business man. [Laughs.]

Well I, I might be. Anyway I know they, they were selling at \$150,000 each, one, one at a time.

Mmm.

And I said listen, you go in there, offer them \$90,000 per unit for all six and they can build them all at the same time.

Mmm.

It worked that way. We finished getting them for \$100,000.

Yeah, but were you happy with the quality of them?

Oh yes.

Mmm.

Ah and, and after \$100,000 we had lock-up garages, all that sort of thing; automatic doors and a few other things. We had to change it a bit because they, they were done the old fashioned way, or typical way with little bathroom, little toilet et cetera, you know this sort of combined thing and made it more suitable for older people.

Mmm.

So, [name of retirement units deleted], *that's another interesting one. Every time we have found that whenever we started something the thing has never stacked up.*

Mmm.

But we did what we could, we stepped out in faith with our Lord, with our heaven, and in the case of [name of retirement units deleted] too we signed a contract for those units [laughing] and there was one lady who took one. See, she was a definite because her son bought it [referring to his mother].

So you relied on people buying it in order to pay for it, yeah.

Anyway, this lady did and then we had another couple who still live there two, who lived up on the hill and we knew they really wanted to shift. They were sort of, I think 75, 74. He wasn't too wealthy any more, and, and we knew they wanted to come closer to the shopping centre so with some, some to-ing and fro-ing, we got them signed up.

Mmm.

And then there was another lady, she only turned 80 a few months ago, she also signed up, so bit by bit, by the time we were finished we had all six occupied.

Mmm.

And we had a waiting list.

So, on the [name of retirement units deleted] site there are actually four stratum title units privately owned, plus the Associations'.

Yes.

The six Association ... Look that's interesting because that's a, that's like a public private mix or a social housing private mix.

And I know that since then one of then one of the private units has been bought by the Association.

Oh right, so now you've got seven.

So, we, our intention is to buy them up as they become vacant.

Mmm, and how does it work though as a community with the private people in there? Do they still be a part of the community.

Oh yeah they, they, they are, then again the feedback I get from the people that live there is, it's wonderful.

Mmm.

Yeah, it's ah, because there's one lady, one of the first that came in, er she, she's very much home bound, house bound, she can't do much and she's 80 something and I also know that the various people around her visit her regularly and, and they have their little meals together, they help her with shopping, go to the library for her. Now it works really well. So that was the next one that we did and at that, on that particular one we, we still expected people to concede with their, well their \$100,000 if they could. You know how this system how it works don't you? Has it been explained?

Well...

Interest free loans?

Oh is that? Yes, you did that in your talk. Yes, I'd have to revisit it. I haven't read it. Yeah.

Yes, we ...

So it is ...

All the units belong to the Association.

Mmm.

And ...

It's almost like a mortgage.

It is and it isn't. Ah, it isn't, no. They just pay a loan to the Association.

Oh they lend it to you?

To the Association.

Oh right.

[Inaudible.]

Yeah.

We, we ... In the case of [name of retirement units deleted] only two of them had the full \$100,000. One had \$80,000. One had \$60,000. Eh, ok.

So you ...

What we did was we lent a third capital, the rest we can borrow but we charged five percent interest, so ok.

So they pay the interest.

Well they would be paying a little bit more than the ones that put in their full amount.

Mmm.

Then of course the, the monthly or weekly charges are for maintenance, gardening, I think, council rates etc and in the case of people who lack any adequate funds to pay for it, they would be paying a bit of interest on the money the Association borrowed to get them in.

Mmm.

So it would be, it would an equitable arrangement.

Mmm.

You know, you wouldn't have people saying hey, I paid the full amount and they, et cetera, et cetera.

So they're paying too. They're paying.

And then it became very successful and ever since that time [name of CEO deleted] has had a waiting list of at least a dozen people saying, can't you do something for me.

Heh, heh. So how did you come up with that model? You did come up with it yourselves? You thought it out yourselves? It's no ... No other organisation would have exactly the same?

No. I, I don't think so. In fact I have said to [name of CEO deleted], we, we need to talk more to other organisations and we should not be seen to be competing with them, not, and yet unfortunately some of them they do.

Mmm.

The bigger ones particularly; the big empire building vehicle. Where they, where they like for other business, compete with one another.

Mmm, because here for you it's about sharing knowledge about how to do what you do well.

Yes.

Which is to provide affordable housing.

Yes.

For older people in the community.

And at, at the moment look what we've ... We've done at [name of town deleted] and we have 28 units there still, I mean that's hostel units. [Name of CEO deleted] applied for another 12 which we could still build on this site.

Mmm.

And they knocked it back.

Oh.

Er, although he's got 22 dwellings, but [name of aged care provider deleted] is it, got approval to build 27 new units in [name of town deleted].

Oh.

And I, I said to [name of CEO deleted] now you should go and talk to these guys and see what sort of waiting list he's got because; and [name of aged care provider deleted] and [name of aged care provider deleted]. You people should be talking to one another.

Mmm.

Because you can all start building these units. But you could all of a sudden get an oversupply.

Mmm.

And er, and we're not in there to compete with one another you know. We're there to provide accommodation for people and let's do it as best we can but without the threat of, or having to look over your shoulder, hey what is he doing.

Yes, yeah but with the hostel accommodation, the way the Commonwealth funding goes, you couldn't get an oversupply of those. There's predicted to be an undersupply, isn't there? Whereas with the private units I suppose there's a risk of an oversupply if you don't really know what the market is.

Yeah, well one thing we haven't done yet, and we have been talking, can do. We have... [Name of CEO deleted] could in fact go ahead if he wanted to and build another dozen units at [name of town deleted] but they would have to be privately funded.

Mmm.

And instead of a person going in ...

Fully privately funded. They'd just meet all the costs.

Yes, fully privately funded. They'd pay a bond at the time. When we built [name of town deleted], the average price for a, a hostel unit built around Australia was say a \$105,000, \$225,000 a bed. We've got it done for \$85,000.

Mmm.

At the time, but now you're talking ... You are talking I am sure at least more like \$120,000 a bed.

Mmm.

So I, I think he could go ahead and do it but he would have to get private people who would pay the full amount.

Mmm.

And who would not get government subsidy. Er, they would have to pay for their care.

Oh dear yes, so they would have to have an income where they could do that.

They would have to be people who are fairly well off because it would cost them ... I know we, most of our money comes from, yeah, that's right, through ... the pensioners, they are allowed to take 85 percent of their pension to pay.

Mmm.

And they can keep 15 percent for their personal expenses.

Mmm.

But I think the government pays at least a dollar for dollar. Well there's a lot of money involved. I mean ...

So, so some of it you still have to recoup from residents.

Of course. You look at it. You look at the hospital where you pay \$600 a day to be in hospital. Well this is nowhere near that. But you're still talking anything between ... Oh, I'm guessing, and I shouldn't be, but I would say it would be three or four hundred dollars per week.

Mmm.

At least.

Mmm, yeah.

But people would have to pay it.

To fully fund, yeah.

To fully fund.

So you would have to, you'd need more than the aged pension.

Yeah, this is where ok the cost of accommodation for older people is sky rocketing so much because it's, ok, but ...

Yes, new standards and there's demand I guess and there's the construction costs and the land prices going up, yeah.

We were, we were marveled at [name of town deleted]. We, we did what er most people haven't done. But again, with our knowledge of how the building industry works, rather than using the old system of calling tenders and taking the lowest tender et cetera, et cetera.

Mmm.

We went to three building firms and said, listen we want a package. We were working with the architect and we want 28 units, we have ...

This is for the hostel.

Two million dollars to spare, to spend.

Mmm, mmm.

And we've got a year to build them in.

Mmm, mmm.

And in fact we finished up with [inaudible] construction company. And we did it because we, we tried to do it the old fashioned way first and it was going to cost \$2.8 million, or the estimates.

Mmm.

And we said we can't afford that.

Mmm.

You know we, we just can't so we have to ...

So you told them how much you had.

Yeah, we had said to say ok this is what we've got, what can you do with it.

Mmm.

And then we got the architect and the builders and the engineers, the whole team, worked together to design this thing within the constraints of the budget we had.

Mmm.

And they got to within ... I think it, it finished up costing us \$2.2 million. We were \$40,000 over. And er...

Mmm, so you had to borrow for that.

Oh well we had to borrow anyway.

Mmm.

Because in fact this is where we would've sold.

So you were over what you could ... You put in what you could borrow plus Commonwealth funding, but you were over what had planned to borrow.

Oh yes, by \$700,000 and well, this is where we were, a bit sore about all this. It's not even how it works exactly and I can't be bothered with that part of it really but.

So ...

At the time we applied to the government for \$500,000 grant because the government guidelines talk about rural and et cetera, and underprivileged areas. I don't know what is used now, but where if you can prove that the, the, the number of applicants or the population is something like 24 percent needing assistance.

Mmm.

You can apply for a grant and we did and being the, the, the [name of area deleted] area we could show from er economic data that we got from the Department, the statistical people.

Mmm.

Ok we were definitely and area of under privileged people; below average incomes.

Mmm.

Anyway we, we, we didn't succeed and yet we still went ahead and then when we, six months before we started building we did not have a single applicant but we had about I think eight expressions of interest from people who wanted to come into the hostel.

Mmm, and so the hostel you didn't, you built it initially without government funding?

No.

No.

No we got government funding.

Yeah.

But we had to find, I think when the, when the, when the hostel was finished, we had to find \$750,000 of our own resources.

Mmm.

Which included a bank loan of \$500,000.

Mmm.

Which we had hoped the government would give us.

Yeah, and which organisations, small organisations don't like to carry that level of risk. It's a big risk really isn't it?

Oh, we were, we were in a very healthy situation.

Ah.

Because by that time we also had already, also 18 independent living units at [name of town deleted]. We had the ones in [name of retirement units deleted], [name of street deleted] and [name of retirement unit complex deleted]. And ...

So you get an income.

So with my business background I knew that provided we had a good cash flow, which we did have from all the income that came from all these units combined. We were able to finance at least the interest and all those things we had to find to borrow those funds you see so, we were never really in, in strife, financially but I know that the government person who was at the official opening, when he found out that we had forty one percent of the occupants of the hostel in [name of town deleted], were, lived, I wouldn't say below the poverty line, but for older, economically, people are pushed so he said I didn't think it was that high. So I said why else do you think we applied.

Mmm.

You know and, and we would've, we would've welcomed your assistance. Well he said, I'll make sure it happens next time. Of course now we want to apply for another dozen units and we don't. We, we got embarrassed.

Yes, because there's a process and no-one has the say at any one point in time. You've got to go through the process each time.

And, and I think. I still also think. I mean I'm a bit of a sceptic that it's not what you know it's who you know.

Well sometimes they go to larger organisations I think. [Name of aged care provider deleted], I don't know, is a larger organisation.

Not only that but the larger organisations, like the Chief Executive of the, of is also the Chair of the Tasmanian Aged Care Association.

Mmm.

[Sensitive information deleted.]

Oh, ah, well ok I have said to [name of CEO deleted] you must get more involved with the bigger world out there, and not you know.

Mmm.

Stick to your own little organisation here. I was very happy to leave the organisation when I did because he's got [name of retirement unit complex deleted] and [name of town deleted] and the other units, independent living units. It's a very neat tidy operation.

Mmm, mmm.

There, there's no surprises anywhere. He's got a steady cash flow. He's got waiting lists in all areas. The, the immediate picture is quite rosy as far as the organisation is concerned.

Mmm.

And it's wonderful to see the, the number of people we can help.

Mmm.

Ah and who are you know, very, very thankful that we're doing what we are doing.

Mmm.

And it's great, really wonderful. So I know they are looking at another area of land in [name of suburb deleted], for future development. Now, one thing that I'm a bit worried about with the government is this push for, whatever they call the terminology for it, where they encourage people to stay at home.

Mmm.

Ageing, ageing-in-place.

Where they can become very isolated.

Exactly.

And the help is not enough.

They say people should stay in their own home. They say they want to stay in their own home and it's not true. Well if you ask a person, yes, I want to stay here. But we know people who have done that and boy oh boy oh boy, they are so lonely.

Mmm.

Hardly anyone looks them up and yet we have a fairly small community. I know [name of retirement unit complex deleted] at the time we were really pleased they had that little community there for of course a dozen or so people. Ah, they would all collect their carton of milk at a certain time in the morning and have a chat, to collect the mail. If all of a sudden they find, hey unit 5, the carton of milk's still there.

Mmm.

Knock on the door, hey are you right. Can I get you a plate of soup or something.

Because an older person can also have a fall and lie for days, otherwise, yeah.

Yeah and that was so wonderful and that's happening everywhere in these small ... They all know their patterns. They all know what they do.

Mmm.

Ok there are other people that say, I don't want to be part of that. That's fine.

Mmm.

I know one person who's 70, 77 or 78, and he asked me the other day, he said why, you're supposed to be an aged care association. Well, why are you building all those independent units for.

Mmm, mmm.

I thought you were supposed to be looking after people in nursing homes he said. I said, no, no, no. The need's much bigger than that.

Mmm.

I said we know that people, the number one priority's security. The second one is companionship.

Mmm.

And then you get all the other things. But they are the things that stick out.

Mmm. Sort of more the individual things, mmm. [Talking over.]

The two things that people want when they, particularly when they are getting old on their own. They become vulnerable, lonely and they need that contact and er so, I've said to [name of CEO deleted] too well, [name of town deleted], you should certainly try and expand it to make it a few more extra buildings because it will be in the longer term a better functioning establishment.

Mmm.

And the income from the increased membership will also help to keep it ... But mind you, I know financially the organisation is doing very well, but there's a very fine line and we ah, have established certain criteria that you've got to work by. For example, the salaries should not exceed I think seventy-three percent of total expenditure.

Mmm, mmm.

Including the senior staff. We know that because we worked it out over the years, and if you go above it this is where a lot of the others, where those who may be in strife find that they're paying eighty percent instead of seventy-three percent.

Mmm.

And that 20 percent is not enough to pay for all the other things.

Mmm.

And ok, so.

It's a principle you work by.

There are certain principles that [name of CEO deleted] works by now and, and anything he does he sort of does on that basis and the result is of course, you know ... [name of CEO deleted] must have given you a pamphlet that showed our mission statement.

I don't, know he didn't. I'll have to get one from him because I want to go down and have another look at [name of town deleted] Village too.

Ok.

From the point of view of just thinking about the design because, that design seems to work very well. That's the further thing I wanted to ask you if we've still got a little time left. The tape will stop in a minute but I can turn it over for the next ten minutes. Is, you know how you learned to do that design. You know, what it was that ... I mean it was partly working with the architect I suppose when you did it, but from the sites that you had and from how it worked there for the residents, you must have then developed some ideas about how to do it better and what was, what worked.

As you said, it was very much in conjunction with the architect. We had the examples of what we did, particularly in [name of retirement units deleted]. We were very much restricted with what we could do because the floor slabs were there. So we had to leave the bathroom where it was and all the other things.

Because of the layout and how they look onto each other. Isn't there? There's things like that.

Yes, well we ...

There's space around it.

Put it this way er, I suppose I put my stamp on it at the time which is more like the stuff they're building next door and ultimately with [name of town deleted].

Mmm.

Which is much more modern than the traditional ...

Mmm.

Er brick veneer.

So, simple clean lines.

Yeah.

And big windows.

And anyway this is why in [name of town deleted] Village we did tell, we did tell the architects, what, er what we wanted and it had to be two, two sizeable bedrooms and er, er a living area big enough where they could have their eatery, also a piano; a few other things.

Mmm.

The kitchen was very important for us.

Mmm.

Making it so that people didn't have to bend down. Doors, and opening doors, all this sort of stuff.

Mmm.

At the right height. And we spent a lot of time working out the, the bathroom, toilet and laundry arrangement for people so, yeah, brick by brick it was, we worked together very closely. We had a lot of trouble at first. The architect wanted to go over top of this with his designs and no we said, you'll ruin the aspect, and the certain aspect we finished up with so ...

The Northern aspect did you say.

Oh yes, very much so.

Mmm.

That was an ideal site because it sloped towards the North so the units behind one another still had a bit of a view.

Mmm.

But they all had the sun in their living area.

Mmm.

Oh, absolutely essential. Yeah it's ... And, and then, now it's become the model. I must admit some of our Board members are more traditional types: What are you doing here? But when we finished the job the harshest critic er, er I overheard him lauding it to everyone. Why this, come and have a look, fantastic I think and so on and so on.

Mmm.

Ha, ha, er; so it is definitely a good standard but I have now been told; I have been told now by, I must say, the real estate people but also latest developments where they say people say they want three bedrooms. They say it's three bedrooms, what, what on earth do you want three bedrooms for.

Mmm.

Oh well, they want another room where they can put their computer and a few other things.

Mmm.

So it's more like a study, or now yeah.

Mmm, but with the two bedrooms you'd have that. I mean that's what most people ... That's what I've seen at [name of town deleted] Village, most people have their bedroom and their computer room. Yeah, but ...

Yeah, well we visited one couple last week for the first time and they, they've been there for ...

But they might want a third bedroom for people to stay, but you can always ...

Well the second bedroom is, it was their den.

Yeah.

She had her things there and he other things there.

Mmm.

And then they had their living area.

Mmm.

But they could not have ... Well they had a day bed in the, in the second bedroom so at least if someone wanted to sleep over they could do it.

Mmm. Yeah, because it can be ridiculous I mean, if you do want to simplify your life the best way is to have a smaller place.

Of course.

Something that's less to look after.

And, and also well we've got a heat pump here of course, smaller units, the heat pump is marvellous. You can have everything off. You don't have to have separate passages and things.

Mmm.

And er so ...

They start to get bigger and the heating cost goes up.

Well the point is with, with I mean with the heat pump of course is the installation cost is much but the running cost is, is comparatively cheap you know compared with other forms and it's instantaneous.

Mmm.

Yes so we are definitely very happy with the [name of town deleted] development.

Mmm, but there aren't heat pumps there. There's Hydroheat there.

They don't have heat pumps. I think they've got ... Hold on, I'm not sure. I, no, not floor heat, er no not floor heat but they do have electric heating.

Yeah.

But the sophisticated more modern type of, yeah because the couple we saw last week did have two types of heaters.

So you could choose your own anyway.

Oh yes.

You could have a heat pump if you wanted.

Yes, yes, yes.

But it would be at an extra cost.

Oh a heat pump would be. Oh yeah and at this stage they said no, and I also have to say that by that time heat pump wasn't ... Hey it was, of course. We've had ours for ten years. It was the in thing.

So what is your view about, the free standing with the space around them versus the ones that were, the older ones, some of them are conjoined are they, or what are the issues with the conjoined ones?

I, I er with [name of town deleted] they could do it because the cost of the land was relatively cheap.

Yeah, and so that's one of the issues. You can't always afford to do it like that.

Ah, I mean if they want to do it in [name of suburb deleted], oh, and a lot of [name of suburb deleted] is reasonably limited, I'm talking about \$200,000, \$250,000 a unit; free standing units are becoming too expensive for lots of reasons.

Mmm.

And they don't ... [tape turned over] or at, if people don't want it, they could have two under one roof but we started off with [name of town deleted] but, but where you might have put two under one roof you might you know, put one, two under one roof.

And yeah, you can put all the plumbing together and.

Ok.

Yeah.

That's right, you can concentrate your plumbing et cetera in the middle and you have you're, yeah, that is still a possibility; free standing units I think are really a luxury.

Mmm.

And it can only happen if you are, like at [name of town deleted] Village, where we've got the space to do it because you've also [inaudible] the gardening, the layout, the, the paths ...

Increases all the maintenance costs.

Oh yes, and then all separate carports and all that.

Yeah.

Oh that was all very well worked out.

Mmm, [name of CEO deleted] was saying, some of the carports, the turn was a bit tight and you moved the posts back and that's fixed the problems.

Yeah.

Nothing's perfect.

Oh no, you're quite right.

Yeah, mmm. I thought that was interesting. That's because the person, the policy person in aged care in our department had said to me you know, that with older people you have to give them plenty of turning room because it's not so easy, yeah.

Mind you again we had one lady there who was economically et cetera, et cetera and er she gets in there and [laughing] she gets this great big Ford Falcon.

Mmm. That's bright. [Laughing.]

A queer one and [laughing] you see, she couldn't even fit it in the carport.

It was too big!

Yes it was just too big. [Laughing.] Why don't you get something smaller, you see. [Laughing.]

Mmm.

Look I know, anyway so park it in the street, I said crikey. I was flabbergasted. Crikey, you don't need a car that size Ah ha ... [laughing] it must have been a childhood dream.

[Laughing.] Yeah, for many people it's a status symbol. Perhaps she inherited it from her husband because I don't think many women want big cars because they find it harder to handle for one thing. I mean I find a bigger car, oh parking and everything you know.

Oh, yes, yes. We've got bigger one though mainly to go on trips, to, go, go on mainland trips.

Yeah and that's if you want to pull a caravan or a boat or something.

Oh yes and also the road base, bigger cars are a bit more comfortable on long trips and I'm talking a Ford Falcon for four, five, ten thousand kilometer trips.

Mmm. It's getting dark now.

Well I've given you what you were looking for. [Turns tape off.]

Appendix 4 – Profile of Residents

Items 1 to 12

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	12
Inter- viewee number	Date of interview	Length of residence	Age	DOB	POB	First language	Postcode	Marital status	Main source of income	Main type of Employment	Highest education level	How would you describe your health
2	22/2/2003	40	70	14/9/1932	Australia	English	7011	Widow	Superannuation/ age pension	Unskilled	Primary	Fair
3	4/3/2003	17	62	15/9/1941	Scotland	English	7050	Divorced	Unemployment benefits	Clerical	High school	Poor
4	8/3/2003	17	54	7/1/1949	Australia	English	7009	Divorced	Paid work	Clerical	High school	Good
5	16/3/2003	5	72	16/4/1931	Australia	English	7018	Widow	Age pension	Professional	Certificate	Fair
6	29/3/2003	7	59	9/7/1943	Australia	English	7009	Divorced	Paid work	Professional	Higher degree	Excellent
7	30/3/2003	44	70	16/4/1933	Austria	German	7009	Divorced	Age pension	Service	Certificate	Fair
8	6/4/2003	52	77	22/11/1925	Yugoslavia	Yugoslav	7004	Widow	Age pension	Unskilled	Matric	Fair
9	5/5/2003	30	86	6/8/1917	Australia	English	7120	Never	Age pension	Unskilled	Primary	Very good
10	5/5/2003	50	75	1/8/1928	Australia	English	7120	Widow	Veterans Affairs pension	Professional	Certificate	Fair
11	18/5/2003	14	72	8/8/1929	Australia	English	7009	Separated	Annuity/pension	Clerical	High school	Good
12	24/5/2003	20	79	16/8/1924	Ukraine	Polish	7009	Widow	Age pension	Service	Not primary	Good
13	25/5/2003	15	71	11/06/1931	England	English	7009	Widow	Super/pension	Teacher	Diploma	Very good

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	12
Inter- viewee number	Date of interview	Length of residence	Age	DOB	POB	First language	Postcode	Marital status	Main source of income	Main type of Employment	Highest education level	How would you describe your health
14	28/5/2003	54	84	12/09/1918	Australia	English	7120	Widow	Vet Affairs	Clerical	High school	Very good
15	28/05/2003	15	82	15/6/1920	England	English	7120	Widow	UK/Aus pension	Unskilled	Some high school	Good
16	8/6/2003	59	87	6/01/1916	Australia	English	7009	Widow	Age pension	Service	Certificate	Very good
17	21/6/2003	42	76	10/02/1926	Australia	English	7109	Widow	Veterans Affairs pension	Unskilled	Some high school	Very good
18	21/6/2003	62	82	22/6/1920	Australia	English	7109	Widow	Veterans Affairs pension	Unskilled	Primary	Excellent
19	22/6/2003	19	70	14/5/1933	England	English	7017	Never	Super/shares	Professional	Postgraduate	Very good
20	30/06/2003	35	78	11/02/1926	Yugoslavia	Yugoslav	7009	Widow	Age pension	Service	High school	Poor
21	6/7/2003	10	73	6/11/1930	England	English	7109	Widow	Age pension	Unskilled	Some high school	Excellent
22	6/7/2003	29	82	1/07/1921	Australia	English	7109	Widow	Veterans Affairs pension	Unskilled	Primary	Fair
23	26/7/2003	2	73	15/4/1929	Australia	English	7005	Widow	Superannuation	Clerical	High school	Good
24	9/8/2003	28	77	30/8/1925	Australia	English	7116	Married	Age pension	Professional	Certificate	Very good
25	16/8/2003	31	70	26/12/2003	Australia	English	7117	Never	Age pension	Unskilled	Some high school	Very good
26	24/8/2003	33	59	13/6/1944	Australia	English	7009	Widow	Unemployment benefits	Unskilled	Some high school	Poor

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	12
Inter- viewee number	Date of interview	Length of residence	Age	DOB	POB	First language	Postcode	Marital status	Main source of income	Main type of Employment	Highest education level	How would you describe your health
27	27/8/2003	10	72	19/5/1931	Australia	English	7010	Widow	Age pension	Service	Some high school	Good
28	30/8/2003	16	82	20/11/1920	England	English	7011	Never	Superannuation	Professional	Diploma	Fair
29	30/8/2003	4	64	19/5/1939	Australia	English	7004	Divorced	Age pension	Unskilled	Some high school	Poor
30	13/6/2005	1	65	23/1/1940	England	English	7140	Divorced	Age pension	Unskilled	High school	Poor
31	17/6/2005	3	74	25/8/1929	England	English	7054	Divorced	Age pension	Clerical	Certificate	Good
32	24/6/2005	13	72	29/6/1932	England	English	7000	Divorced	Age pension	Professional	Degree	Excellent
33	29/6/2005	3	82	19/2/1923	England	English	7011	Separated	Age pension	Clerical	Matric	Very good
34	27/6/2005	2	72	14/11/1932	England	English	7005	Divorced	Age pension	Professional	Postgraduate	Excellent
35	27/6/2005	4	53	11/12/1951	Australia	English	7004	Divorced	Disability pension	Unskilled	Degree	Fair
36	29/6/2005	35	65	5/10/1940	New Zealand	English	7004	Divorced	Age pension	Professional	Diploma	Fair

Items 13 to 26

	13	14	15	15a	16	17	18	19	21	23	24	25	26
Interview number	Which best describes how you feel?	No. of community based organisations you belong to	Type of house	Housing tenure type	Neighbourhood type	How do you feel about where you are living now?	Transport	Main Trans	Phone	Disability	Do you need help to get around?	Type of help needed	Social network
2	Hardly ever	0	Semi-detached	Owned	Suburban	Unhappy	No	Bus	Yes	No	No		Some
3	Hardly ever	2	Villa Unit	Owned	Suburban	Happy	No	Own car	Yes	No	No		Rich
4	Hardly ever	0	House	Purchasing	Suburban	Satisfied	No	Bus	Yes	No	No		Some
5	Never	2	Villa Unit	Owned	Suburban	Satisfied	No	Own car	Yes	Yes	Yes		Rich
6	Hardly ever	2	House	Purchasing	Suburban	Happy	No	Own car	Yes	No	No		Some
7	Sometimes	1	House	Owned	Suburban	Satisfied	No	Own car	Yes	No	Yes		Some
8	Sometimes	4	House	Owned	Suburban	Satisfied	No	Own car	Yes	Yes	No		Some
9	Sometimes	5	House	Owned	Small Town	Happy	No	Driven	Yes	No	Yes	Walking stick	Rich
10	Hardly ever	1	House	Owned	Small Town	Very happy	No	Driven	Yes	Yes	Yes	Oxygen	Rich
11	Sometimes	5	House	Owned	Suburban	Satisfied	No	Own car	Yes	No	No		Some
12	Most of the time	3	House	Owned	Suburban	Happy	Yes	Driven	Yes	No	Yes		Rich
13	Sometimes	1	Villa Unit	Owned	Suburban	Happy	Yes	Own car	Yes	Yes	Yes	Walking stick	Rich
14	Hardly ever	1	Farm	Owned	Rural	Very happy	No	Own car	Yes	No	No	No	Rich

Interview number	13 Do you ever feel lonely?	14 No. of community based organisations you belong to	15 Type of house	15a Housing tenure type	16 Neighbourhood type	17 How happy are you with where you are living now?	18 Transport	19 Main Trans	21 Phone	23 Disability	24 Do you need help to get around?	25 Type of help needed	26 Social network
15	Sometimes	3	House	Owned	Small Town	Very happy	Yes	Driven	Yes	Yes	Yes	Walking stick	Some
16	Sometimes	1	House	Owned	Suburban	Happy	No	Taxi	Yes	Yes	No		Some
17	Hardly ever	1	House	Owned	Rural	Satisfied	Yes	Bus	Yes	Yes	No		Some
18	Sometimes	2	House	Owned	Rural	Very happy	No	Driven	Yes	Yes	Yes	Blind	Rich
19	Sometimes	3	House	Owned	Suburban	Very happy	No	Own car	Yes	No	No		Rich
20	Sometimes	6	House	Owned	Suburban	Unhappy	Yes	Taxi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Walking stick	Rich
21	Never	3	House	Owned	Small Town	Happy	Yes	Own car	Yes	No	No		Some
22	Often	4	House	Owned	Small Town	Very happy	No	Driven	Yes	Yes	Yes	Walking stick	Rich
23	Hardly ever	4	Villa Unit	Owned	Suburban	Happy	No	Own car	Yes	No	No		Rich
24	Sometimes	4	House	Owned	Rural	Very happy	No	Own car	Yes	No	Yes	Walking stick	Rich
25	Sometimes	5	House	Owned	Small Town	Happy	No	Own car	Yes	No	No		Rich
26	Sometimes	6	House	Owned	Suburban	Happy	No	Bus	Yes	No	No		Rich
27	Sometimes	4	House	Owned	Suburban	Very happy	No	Own car	Yes	No	No		Rich
28	Never	4	Villa Unit	Owned	Suburban	Very happy	No	Own car	Yes	No	No		Some

	13	14	15	15a	16	17	18	19	21	23	24	25	26
Interview number	Do you ever feel lonely?	No. of community based organisations you belong to	Type of house	Housing tenure type	Neighbourhood type	How happy are you with where you are living now?	Transport	Main Trans	Phone	Disability	Do you need help to get around?	Type of help needed	Social network
30	Never	4	Villa Unit	Public housing	Large town	Very happy	No	Own car	Yes	Yes	No		Rich
31	Sometimes	0	Villa Unit	Lifetime lease	Outskirts of city	Happy	Yes	Own car	Yes	No	No		Some
32	Never	3	House	Owned	Inner city	Very happy	No	Own car	Yes	No	No		Some
33	Sometimes	0	Bed-sitter	Lifetime lease	Suburban	Very happy	No	Taxi	Yes	No	Yes	Walker	No
34	Hardly ever	3	House	Owned	Suburban	Very happy	No	Own car	Yes	No	No		Rich
35	Hardly ever	0	Villa Unit	Lifetime lease	Suburban	Very happy	No	Bus	Yes	Yes	No		Rich
36	Sometimes	2	House	Owned	Suburban	Satisfied	Yes	Walk	Yes	No	No		Some

Items 28 to 30

	27	28	29	30
Interview number	Closeness with children	Relationships with siblings	No. of confidantes	Internet/email
2	Not often	No or poor	One	No
3	Not often	Likes but	One	No

	27	28	29	30
Interview number	Contact with children	Contact with siblings	No. of confidantes	Internet/email
4	Not often	Likes but	No	Yes
5	One often	No or poor	One	Yes
6	One often	Good, one	One	No
7	One often	Likes but	One	No
8	Not often	No or poor	No	No
9	None	Good, one	One	No
10	One often	None	One	No
11	One often	None	No	No
12	One often	None	One	No
13	One often	Likes but	One	No
14	One often	Likes but	One	No
15	Likes but	None	One	No
16	One often	Good, one	One	No
17	One often	Good, one	One	No
18	One often	Good, one	One	No

	27	28	29	30
Interview number	Contact with children	Contact with siblings	No. of confidantes	Internet/email
19	None	Good, one	One	Yes
20	One often	Likes but	One	No
21	One often	Good, one	One	No
22	One often	Likes but	One	No
23	Likes but	Likes but	One	No
24	One often	Good, one	One	No
25	None	None	No	No
26	One often	None	No	No
27	One often	Good, one	One	Yes
28	None	Good, one	One	No
29	One often	Good, one	One	No
30	Likes but	Good, one	One	Yes
31	None	None	One	Yes
32	One often	None	One	Yes

	27	28	29	30
Interview number	Contact with children	Contact with siblings	No. of confidantes	Internet/email
33	One often	Likes but	One	No
34	Likes but	None	One	Yes
35	One often	Good, one	One	Yes
36	One often	Likes but	One	No

Appendix 5 – Profile of Workers

Worker 1: A female in her late thirties, with ten years experience as manager of operational policy for a state housing authority and a previous background in social housing policy and research. Her formal qualifications included post graduate qualifications in social research.

Worker 2: A female in her early to mid forties, recently appointed manager in social housing policy and research. Her formal qualifications included post graduate qualifications in social research on a topic relevant to ageing and housing. Her previous work experience was policy and research, primarily in the area of health promotion, including having been a researcher involved in the Healthy Communities Survey (1998).

Worker 3: A male in his early to mid-fifties, senior policy officer in aged care who had been in the position for about six years and whose previous work background was in banking, where he had developed awareness of housing issues for older people from a financial perspective.

Worker 4: A male in his late forties who for about ten years had been chief executive officer of a community based housing provider that included housing for older people and prior to that, with a housing advocacy body. His formal qualifications included a Diploma in Welfare Studies and Ph. D. in Sociology; the latter on a social housing relevant topic.

Worker 5: A female aged around forty, a public sector worker in community outreach for aged care, whose role was visiting and assessing the suitability of older people's homes. Her formal qualifications were in Occupational Therapy.

Worker 6: A female aged around forty, a public sector worker on the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT), whose role was visiting and assessing people's eligibility for Aged Care services, including for residential aged care. Her formal qualifications were in nursing and she was an accredited ISO auditor.

Worker 7: A male in his mid-fifties working as the chief executive officer of a community based housing and aged care provider. He had been in the position for about eight years and his previous work experience was in banking.

Worker 8: A male in his mid-sixties, recently retired chair of a large community based housing and aged care provider where he had worked as a volunteer board member for over thirty years. His work background and qualifications were as a builder at the head of a large commercial construction company.