

# How Are Seniors Living In Public Housing Coping With Ageing Dwellings?

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An increasing number of seniors are reliant on public housing for their accommodation in the Northern Territory. However, as the average age of public housing tenants increases, so does the age of public housing assets. This is a national trend caused by various state housing authority disposal programs, and a lack of public funding for strategic asset redevelopment.

This study considers how seniors are coping with living in ageing public housing dwellings. The project aims to understand the relationship between senior public housing tenants and their ageing dwelling, and explore whether ageing dwellings have any impact upon the health and well-being of the senior tenants.

Seven public housing tenants aged 55 or over, living in dwellings constructed prior to 1980 in the greater Darwin area, participated in semi-structured interviews. These were analysed using a general inductive approach. When integrated with the literature, the findings clearly demonstrate that the relationship between senior tenants and their ageing dwelling is a complicated mix of the physical, social, neighbourhood, economic, and administrative environments.

This study also demonstrates how participants draw heavily from autobiographical references created over the length of their tenancy, with the majority of participants willing to suffer poor housing conditions in order to safeguard long established routines, support networks and emotional attachments. The findings also indicate that the relationship between participants and the Department of Housing is important to their well-being.

This research is significant in that it provides new insight into how issues are experienced by seniors in the Northern Territory, and may inform future seniors housing policy and the delivery of public housing in the Northern Territory.