

Baby boomer women ageing in place: Childlessness, social policy, and housing in Australia

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Statement of originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis to be available worldwide when deposited in the University's Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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Publications and conference presentations from this research

- Curryer, C 2016, 'Ageing-in-place and the risks associated with housing in later life', Conference Presentation, The Annual Conference of The Australian Sociological Association (TASA). Published in the Refereed Proceedings of TASA 2016 Conference. Cities and Successful Societies. Fitzroy, Melbourne.
- Curryer, C 2016, 'Remember, I live with my mother': The housing circumstances of women baby boomers in Australia', Conference Presentation, Emerging Researchers in Ageing (ERA), 31st October 2016, Canberra ACT Australia.
- Curryer, C, Gray, M & Byles, JE 2016, 'Re-imagining relationships: the experience of childlessness in later life', Tabletop presentation, Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG), Canberra ACT Australia.
- Curryer, C, Gray, M & Byles, JE 2018, 'Back to my Old Self and Life Restarting: Biographies of Ageing in Beck's Risk Society', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 54, 2, pp. 249-263.
- Curryer, C, Gray, M and Byles, JE 2018, 'Older Women's Expectations of Care, Reciprocity, and Government Support in Australia. 'Am I Not Worthy?''', *Ethics and Social Welfare*, published online 15 August 2018. Doi:10.1080/17496535.2018.1505928

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Abstract

As an intrinsic part of everyday life, risk plays a key role in shaping decision-making and outcomes in older age. Some of the most important decisions and choices that individuals will face relate to later life and whether to remain living in the home or, alternatively, moving into residential aged-care. These decisions become more complex within the contexts of housing unaffordability, changing social and family structures, and rapidly shifting welfare and aged-care policy contexts. Drawing on Beck's risk society, structural individualisation, and person-environment (PE-fit) this qualitative study examined older women's housing and social circumstances, and their plans and expectations for housing and support. Longitudinal free-text survey comments and interviews with women (born 1946-1951) were analysed. Questions included: (i) What are the housing and social circumstances of older women in Australia? (ii) How might parental status, such as *being childless*, influence ageing in place? (iii) For women who are childless, what are their needs, preferences, and expectations and what plans have they made for housing and care? (iv) What are the key issues for older women ageing in Australia?

The study found that many women made housing decisions within the contexts of family and social relationships. Interdependencies of care shaped decision-making regarding housing consumption, and choices in other life domains. Socio-relational aspects of PE-fit (friendships, belonging, shared histories, and support) were valued highly. Some women had wanted to relocate but found their choices constrained. Around half were adamant they would not move from their current residence, with residential aged-care seen as a last resort. Most women had not made plans beyond homeownership. Planning was perceived as either unnecessary (too young and still healthy), impractical, or too uncertain. Some women criticised government policies that kept changing, particularly without regard to women's historical gender disadvantage. Consequently, women's preparations for later life might prove inadequate.

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List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ALSWH	Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
AWOC	Ageing Without Children
BB	Baby boomer
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CDC	Consumer-directed care
CHSP	Commonwealth Home Support Program
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CRA	Commonwealth Rental Assistance (Australia)
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
HDR	Higher Degree Research
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender
MND	Motor Neurone Disease
PE-fit	Person-environment fit
RAC	Residential aged-care
UK	United Kingdom
U3A	University of the Third Age
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organisation

