

SETTING POLICY IN CONCRETE—THE IMPACT OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT ON PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN AGED CARE HOMES

Table 25: Residents - Everyday Needs

A wardrobe big enough to hold my clothes with a light	A photo board at the entrance
A say in the furniture I can have in my room	Be able to watch my clothes dry in the wind
My own private bathroom	Fresh flowers
A glass of wine with dinner	Good television and radio reception
Some garden seats and planter boxes	Clean windows
Net curtains	Better food
Care and cleanliness	A little dog
A game of Scrabble	Space for my computer

The 'little' things that residents highlighted were important for them.



Discussion and Recommendations

- The development of RACFs is contested territory, requiring large amounts of capital and recurrent funding. But as this study has demonstrated, in a small way, bringing these voices together can awaken new ideas and approaches; perhaps even daring and imagination. It is clear however that no one party can bring about change on their own – it will take a collaborative effort. This is where future research might best focus its efforts.
- It is important to place residents at the centre of the design processes if alternative humanistic and flexible models of care are to prevail. The residents have much to offer – “Why can’t I have a light in my wardrobe?” was a question posed by a woman I interviewed – not once did I see this highlighted in the literature and research I reviewed but it is a very good idea!

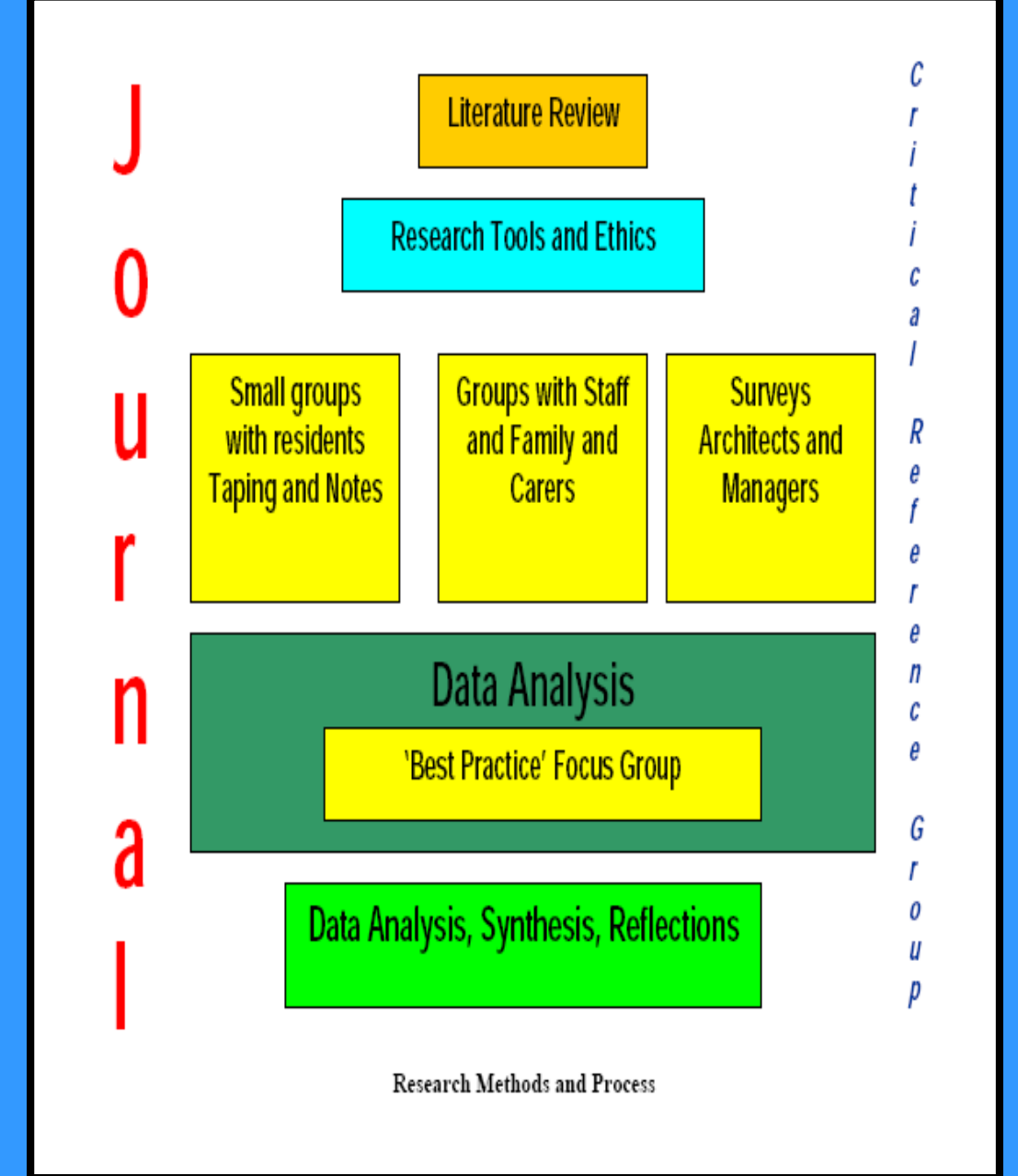


Research Question
What role does the built environment play in the lives of older people (without dementia) who live in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF)?



Method

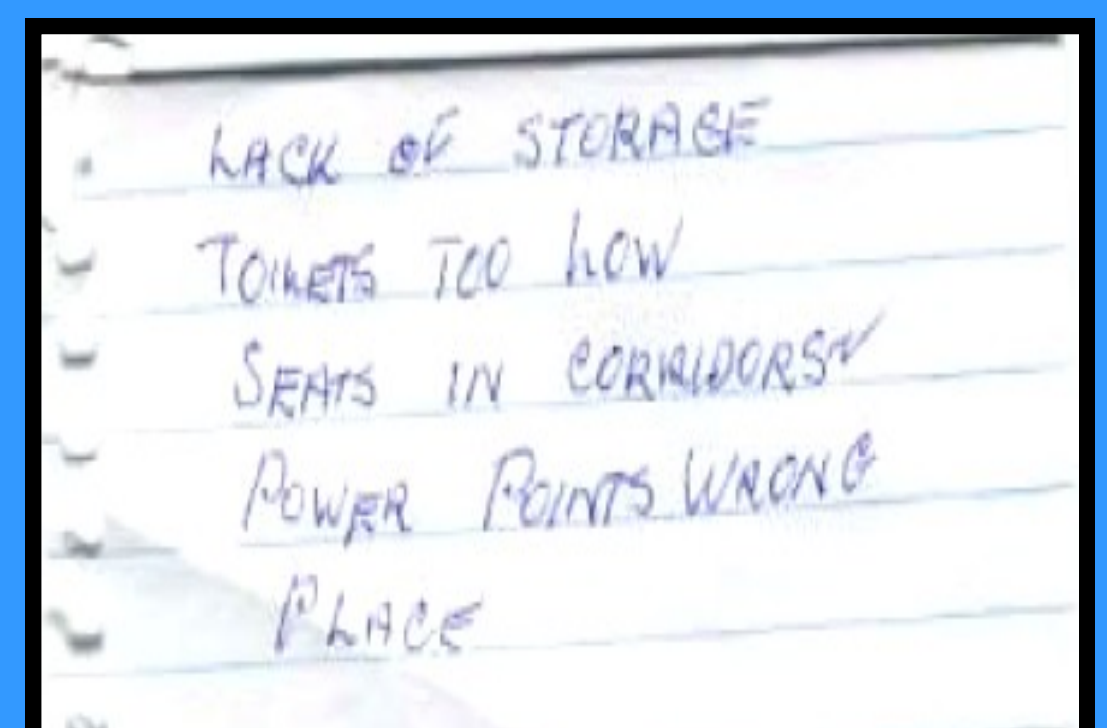
- A multi-method design was used to undertake the research between 2001 and 2008.
- The study involved a review of the literature, interviews with residents, staff, family and carers at three RACFs in Victoria, Australia.
- Views of architects and managers in the field were also sought through the use of surveys and a forum with leaders in the field.
- A Critical Reference Group (CRG) also provided critical input into the research process.
- The process is illustrated in the Figure below.



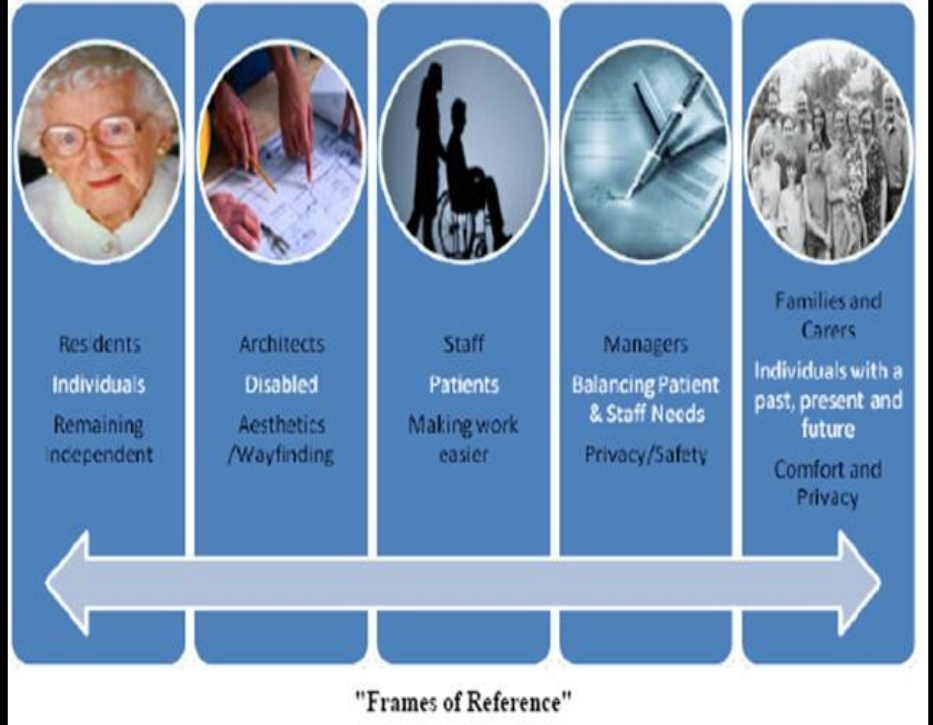
RESIDENTS	FAMILIES and CARERS	STAFF	ARCHITECTS and MANAGERS
Homeliness TV Radio Reception Activities Local Community	Privacy Main Theatre Clear Contracts	Ventilation Security Floor coverings Filing and Communication Staff Assemblies	Government Regulations Financial Imperatives Occupational Health and Safety
Agreement - Residents, Families and Carers Single Level, 'bridge, Cleanliness, Noise Management, Animals		Agreement - Families, Carers and Staff Heating and Cooling, Surveillance	

STAKEHOLDER—AREAS OF AGREEMENT

- All residents should have single rooms with ensuites (and toilets at the right height), with good lighting and enough, and easy to access, storage space with some freedom to personalise their room.
- Residents should be able to move around easily within the RACF with access to gardens.
- The built environment should encourage and facilitate residents so that they can remain as independent and active as possible.



This note was given to me by a resident when I arrived for the first group meeting at one of the facilities. These things really impacted on her quality of life and she did not want to forget.



Findings (1)
The research identified and explored the key areas of concern for each of these stakeholders, considering how residential aged care services could do more to improve the quality of life for residents through the built environment.