



ask ech

Home Fit for Life

Dorothy Nycz, Chief Operating Officer
ECH Inc.

LASA National Congress 2019

ECH Retirement Living portfolio



- Established in 1964
- Currently 105 villages / 1,692 units / 1,837 residents
- Primarily South Australian metropolitan areas
- Generally smaller (10-15 units), at-grade villages integrated into the community
- Includes home & garden maintenance, council rates, water rates

Ageing in place

- Dominant policy narrative
- Aligned with the wishes of a vast majority of older Australians

- BUT...when ageing in place, which 'place' is best?
 - Long-term family home
 - Purpose-built, age-specific housing

An opportunity for research...

- 2012: Major ILU investment planned
 - >600 units to be substantially refurbished
 - Up to 300 new ILUs to be constructed

- Longitudinal study in conjunction with the University of Adelaide
 - Anticipated enrolling 450 new ECH residents
 - Control group of 700 'community-dwelling' older South Australians
 - Annual survey-based data collection for 7 years (health, wellbeing, social connectedness etc.)

The changing context

- 2012-2013: Data collection commenced
 - Community wave 1: 700 respondents
 - ECH residents: On entry to new/substantially refurbished units

- 2014-2015: Significant changes to ECH
 - Divestment of residential aged care – focus on care in the community
 - New Chief Executive
 - New strategic plan: increasing view of social purpose
 - Reconsideration of the role of benevolence across ECH portfolios

The changing context (2)

- Review of the Village Development Plan
 - Reduction in anticipated village construction
 - Slowing of refurbishment program – fewer ‘major’ refurbishments

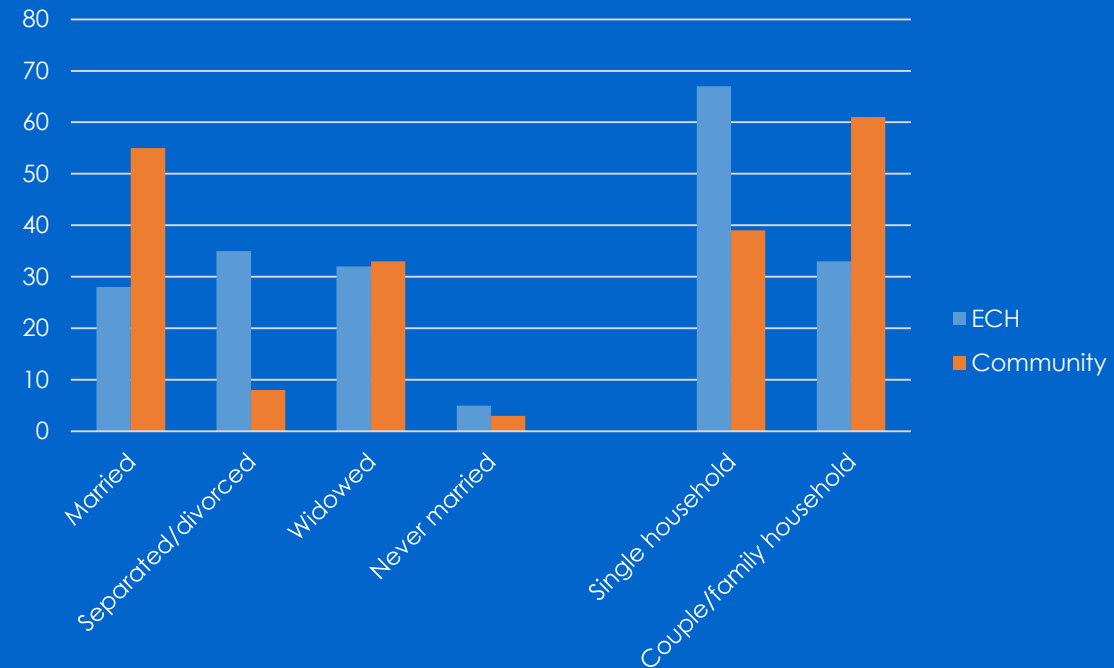
- Increase in the proportion of ECH ILUs offered on rental contracts
 - National Rental Affordability Scheme
 - Rental properties increased to 30% of portfolio

Impact on research

- General change in sociodemographic profile of ECH entry population with increased proportion of renters
- Delayed recruitment of baseline ECH cohort
 - Rolling recruitment over 5 years [maximum 3 years]
- Change in eligibility criteria for ECH cohort entering the study
 - All people entering all ECH housing (ECU/rental; minor/major refurb; new/existing units; purchased villages) [new, major refurb, ECU]
 - All ages [70+]
 - Not all units at Gold Standard Liveable Housing Design

Cohort demographic comparisons

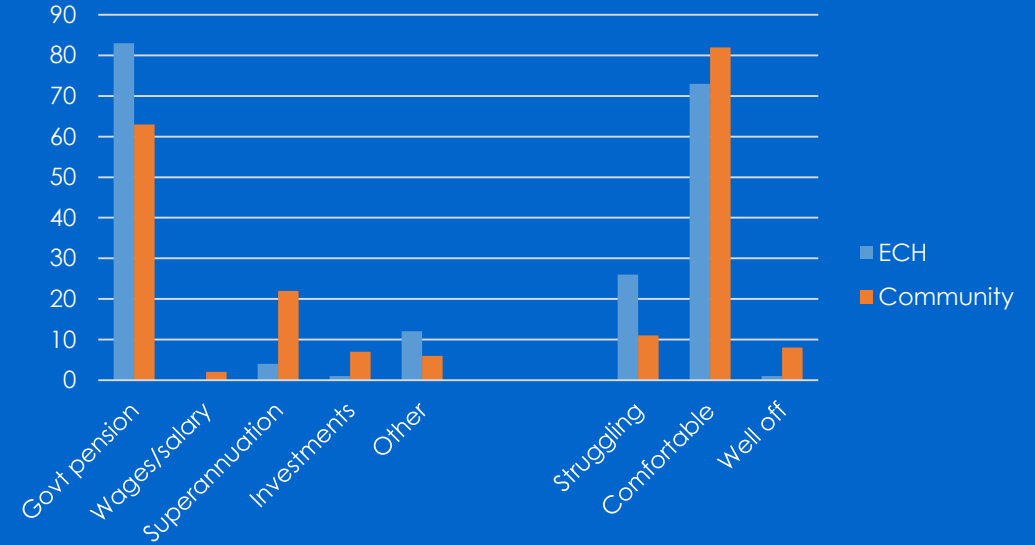
- Wave 1 baseline:
 - ECH resident cohort N = 315
 - Community cohort N = 697
- Community cohort older
- ECH cohort more likely to be in a single person household
- More ECH residents born overseas
- ECH cohort slightly less healthy at entry



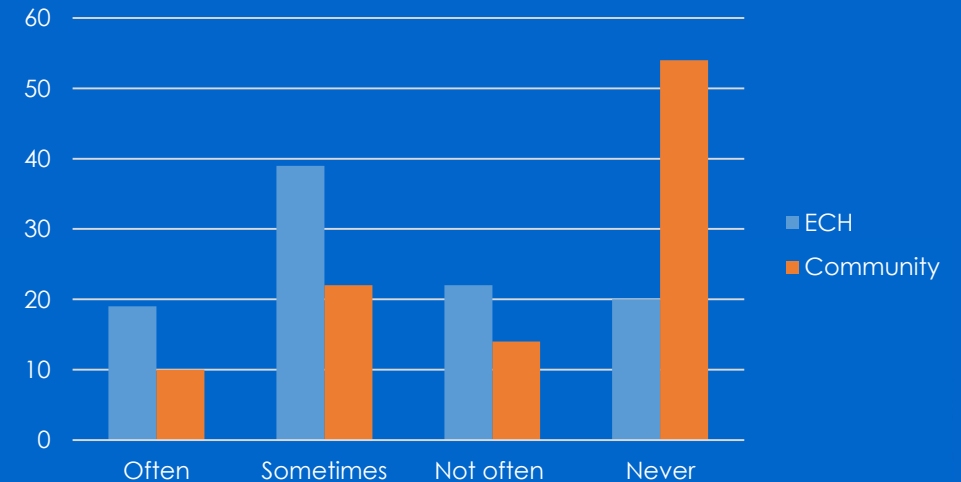
Cohort demographic comparisons

● ECH cohort indicated lower financial capacity at entry:

- Higher reliance on government pensions
- 26% felt they were struggling financially
- 58% reported that shortage of money often or sometimes stopped them doing things

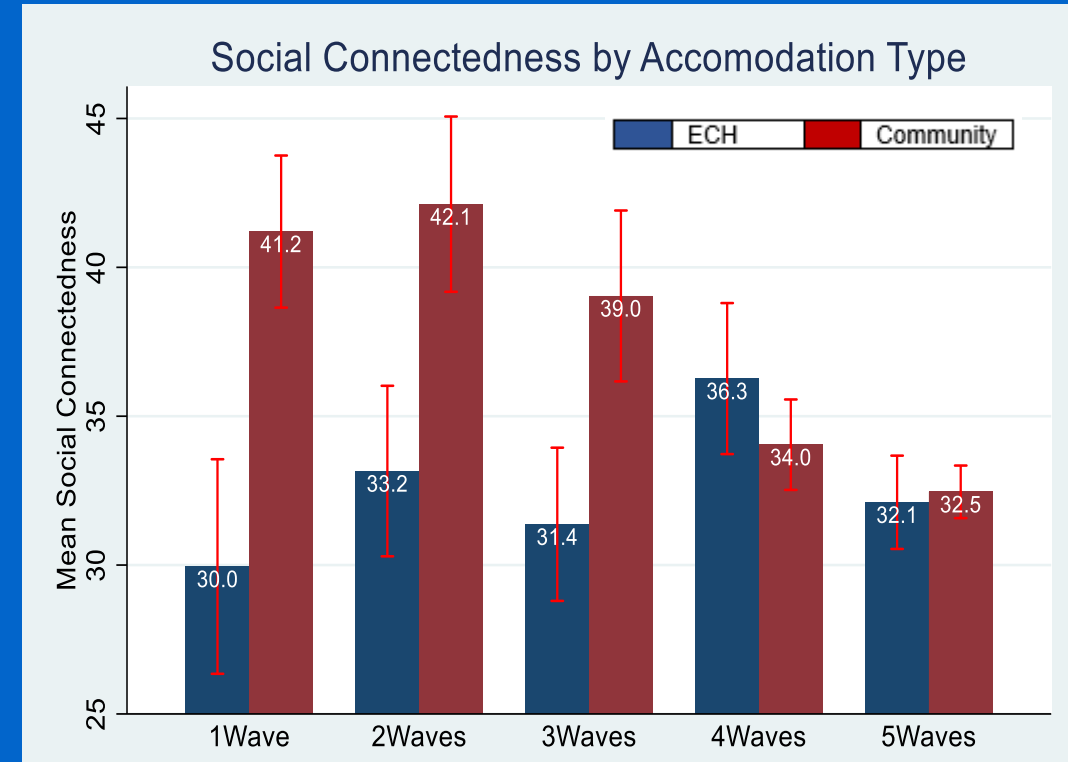


Shortage of money stops me doing things...



High-level longitudinal findings: all

- General health: no significant differences
- Physical health (SF-36): no significant differences at waves 1 and 3; possible difference favouring the community at waves 2 and 5
- Mental health (SF-36): No significant differences
- Social connectedness: ECH cohort significantly lower scores in waves 1-3; no difference at waves 4 & 5



High-level longitudinal findings: rental

- ECH renter versus ECH ECU...versus rental in private sector
- Private rental market can cause substantial issues for older people, including reduced physical and mental wellbeing
- ECH rental residents and ECH ECU residents demonstrate very few differences in mean values across physical and mental health scores

Bringing it together + next steps

- ECH residents maintain their health and wellbeing over time – albeit at a slightly lower level than the general community sample
- ECH residents maintain social support scores, which decline in the community cohort
- Identification of a more like-for-like comparison group would offer more insight into value of age-specific housing for people with lower socio-economic capacity
- Further enhancements to housing service model

have questions?

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