

### Can retirement villages boost your wellbeing in older age? This couple think so.

*Julie and Bryan decided to buy into BaptistCare's Kintyre Living Retirement Village in Dubbo in their early sixties. More than 15 years later, they say the move has had a powerful impact on their overall wellbeing and is the best choice they ever made.*



*Julie and Bryan had always enjoyed a fulfilling career in hospitality, managing motels and caravan parks around the country. They knew what made a place feel like home. So when they came across the newly developed Kintyre Living Retirement Village in their hometown of Dubbo in 2008, they knew they'd found something special.*

*We sat down with Julie and Bryan to learn more about their fifteen years of retirement living, what prompted them to make the move, and why they believe this lifestyle choice has such a positive effect on wellbeing in older age.*

## Why did you decide to move into a retirement village?

*“As part of our jobs in tourism and hospitality, we’d been living on the road for several years, managing motels and caravan parks around Australia,” says Bryan. “We were ready to put down some roots and be closer to our children, who all lived in Dubbo at the time.”*

*“My father had lived with dementia for a long time, which had been challenging,” adds Julie. “We didn’t want our children to have to worry about taking care of us in our older age, so retirement living seemed like a great option. We would be part of a friendly community and have our own support network, freeing our kids up to travel and do what they wanted.”*

## How did you know which retirement village was right for you?

*“We came upon Kintyre Living Retirement Village purely by chance,” says Julie. “We decided to have a picnic one day down by the river and noticed these lovely-looking homes over the road, so we drove over to take a closer look.*

*“After a quick tour, Bryan – who rarely makes impulsive decisions – immediately asked how much we’d need to pay for a deposit.”*

*“That was over fifteen years ago when the development was fairly new,” adds Bryan. “There were only ten houses at that time, and now there are 96 homes within the village and plans for further development.*



Julie and Bryan enjoying St Patrick's Day celebrations in the BaptistCare Kintyre Living Country Club.

*"But the village was exactly what we wanted and has always suited us down to the ground. Having grown up in and around Dubbo, we were attracted to the village's country feel - beautiful leafy trees and a spacious, open aspect to the grounds.*

*"It was also the perfect distance from town, and with attractive amenities such as the swimming pool, tennis court, library, computer room, and a busy activities program to keep us socially active."*

## **What has been your experience of retirement living over the years?**

*"Initially, we were still working when we moved," explains Bryan. "And given our roles in hospitality, retirement living gave us the freedom to travel and be away for longer periods without worrying about what was going on back at home."*

*"A staff member would walk through our home regularly when we had a mouse plague to check for vermin," says Julie. "You knew people were watching over your place, which gave us such peace of mind."*

*"Once we retired, we continued travelling and even went on a round-the-world cruise for three months, which was amazing."*

*“The social aspect has been fantastic,” adds Bryan. “Personally, retirement living has brought me out of myself a bit more, and I’ve been involved in several social groups like football, bowls, pool exercises, and darts. Both Julie and I have been members of the social committee, which has been great fun. We’ve been able to make new friends and form a strong social circle.”*



Bryan says retirement living has helped him become more socially outgoing, getting involved in several new hobbies and activities around the village.

## **Is there a balance between the vibrant social scene and a sense of privacy?**

*“Absolutely,” says Julie. “I’m a very sociable person but I also greatly value my privacy. We are often asked if living in a retirement community means having people knocking on your door 24/7. That just doesn’t happen.*

*“If I’m sitting on my verandah or working in the front garden, people walking by might stop for a quick chat. But if your door is shut, no one tends to bother you. It’s a good balance.”*

## What do you think are the main benefits of retirement living?

*“I can’t stress enough how fulfilling it is living in a community like this,” says Bryan.*

*“Yes, if you live in a normal street, often you barely know your immediate neighbours,” Julie agrees. “But here, you can get to know people well, even if they live at the other end of the village.*

*“Of course, like any community, there are some people you have more in common with than others, but generally speaking, it’s easy to make friends, and in our experience at least – it’s difficult to become lonely.”*

*“People are aware of others’ situations and possible health issues – particularly our closer neighbours,” says Bryan. “We often ask after them, and they do the same for us. We all care about our neighbours and support where we can.”*

*Along with staying socially active through small hobby groups, Bryan and Julie also say the village amenities have helped them to stay physically fit and healthy.*

*“We both love using the swimming pool, bowling green and tennis courts. We also regularly attend exercise classes, water aerobics, and line dancing classes in the Clubhouse, although we have started to slow down a bit of late” says Bryan.*

*“The BaptistCare staff are excellent,” adds Julie. “The fact that they take care of the small, everyday maintenance tasks around the home is such a help. If you need a light bulb changed, for example, or one of your doors or windows needs fixing – you pop a yellow maintenance slip into the management office, and they’ll get it sorted. It’s a fantastic benefit and saves us so much stress.”*



## What advice would you give someone considering the move into a retirement village?

*“I’d say go for it and consider making the move earlier than you think you should,” says Julie. “So often we hear people saying how they wish they’d moved five or even ten years earlier than they did.”*

*“We see younger residents more involved in the social aspect of the village and enjoying the amenities - more so than the older residents who make the move in their late seventies and eighties.”*



Bryan and Julie enjoy hosting their family when they come to visit Kintyre.

*“I’d also advise taking the co-located [BaptistCare Kintyre Lodge](#) into consideration too,” says Bryan. “The Lodge is a residential aged care home located next to the retirement community and is great to have on-site in case you or your spouse ever need additional care. You never know what the future can hold, and I think it’s always wise to be prepared.*

*“It’s not something that Julie and I are ready for just yet, but we have friends who’ve greatly benefitted from having the aged care home located just around the corner.”*

*“There are just so many wonderful aspects to retirement living,” says Julie. “There’s security, companionship, and a team of caring staff – what more could you need? I just have an overall feeling of wellness living here – we couldn’t recommend it more highly.”*

## **Find your nearest BaptistCare retirement community**

*If you’re curious to see the benefits of retirement living for yourself, why not book a tour of your local village?*

*Use our handy online tool to find a location in New South Wales or Canberra at [baptistcare.org.au/locations/retirement-community-locations](http://baptistcare.org.au/locations/retirement-community-locations).*

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*BaptistCare has been trusted by thousands of Australians across the retirement living, aged care and community service sectors since 1944. While we are not-for-profit, there are a few things that we certainly are for: outstanding quality and a quest to truly make a difference, not just in our Retirement living communities, but in all communities.*