

CAROL

RESIDENT FOR 5 YRS

I had cancer in my kidney when I moved here; I had a 3 bedroom, home on an 800sq m block. My son said "you can't this on your own." So I decided to sell the house - that was hard, whatever amount I got I had to stay within that price range. I was determined not to go into debt again. I could buy this (the caravan and annex) and be debt free, without the garden etc. The people here welcomed me and invited me over for coffee. Before being in a house, even your neighbors you know, but you don't really.

I think most of us have come here for health or financial reasons.

It works here because I know there are people close to me. If anything happened somebody would know. We all look after each other and it doesn't matter if you need a pin, or a money loan. You're not sitting in a big house on your own thinking what am I going to do now?

My family comes down here, and they are involved with everybody. I know the kids are safe and they can go into anyone's house. I say "stay on the road", and I know my grand-daughter will be fine.

I feel a real sense of community when we have our back lane teas or feeds. Everybody puts in, it's not a pick and choose, everyone enjoys a part of everybody else's culture. There are different foods. Marilyn cuts my hair; Thai will give me a massage. I know as a single lady if I have a problem I can't sort out myself I can ask one of the men, rather than call a tradesman. These people are open to everything.

With Lenny, he has got somebody over in Thailand that has to have a kidney transplant, everybody here got together to hold an auction, raffle to raise money for it. He said "I can't accept", and we said "we are giving it to you." That was a moment I realized how much support there is here. Everyone knows what is going on with people. Somebody organizes something and it goes from there. We help each other. I don't know that Lenny has family here, so we are family for everybody.

We are such a mixture, we aren't all young or old or juvenile's, we have a mixture of everything, and we bring others in too - our families... my son does bench tops for example. We bring our own, and we share well. We don't hold back anything, and if we can give something to help someone, we do. When we go away; someone will look after your house or water your plants. We are also very accepting of everybody, we don't have any prejudices.

I would like the people in the community (of permanent residents) to know that all of them are a special group of people, and they all bring their own talents, and they are willing to share them. And I am thankful for that, or things might be harder.