



Bigger is better for older Aussies

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 LIFESTYLE REPORTER

DOWNSIZING is far from the minds of most older Australians who continue to live in three-bedroom homes on large suburban blocks.

An Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute study, to be released today, found 84 per cent of the properties over-55s call home are "under-utilised", according to the widely-used Canadian National Occupancy Standard.

Institute executive director Dr Ian Winter said most Australians in this age group did not believe their homes were too large.

COTA Seniors Voice chief executive Ian Yates warned against classifying homes as "too big", and believed the issue for many revolved around maintaining neighbourhood contacts.

"You've also got to remember, for most people 55 isn't old and you can't forget the adult kids still lingering around," he said.

Broadview resident Barbara Cantlon, 77, and husband Ray, 80, continue to live in the home they moved into 56 years ago.

"We're very happy here, it's where all our friends are," Mrs Cantlon said. "It's a large block, if we did move, they'd probably knock down the house and subdivide it."

But retirees Betty and Norman Jarrett believed downsizing was the best option for them, and shifted into their Findon villa 10 years ago.

"We wanted a smaller garden more than anything," Mrs Jarrett, 68, said.

DOWNSIZING: Betty and Norman Jarrett have bought a smaller, retirement-style home in Findon.

Picture: SARAH REED