



THE AUSTRALIAN  
**EHEALTH**  
RESEARCH CENTRE



## At home in Quandamooka

Scoping report for the feasibility and cultural safety of Smarter Safer Homes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Quandamooka Country.

### The challenge

Historical and contemporary experiences of colonisation and racism have contributed to disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Difficulties accessing culturally safe health and aged care compound these challenges. CSIRO has looked at innovative ways of employing technology to support older people to live at home with the provision of appropriate care and safety in place to achieve a positive quality of life. Emerging digital technologies have been developed to assist older Australians to live safely and independently in their homes or in aged care facilities. CSIRO believe this is the first research project to trial smart home technology to support living on Country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### Our response

Researchers at the Australian E-Health Research Centre (AEHRC), CSIRO's digital health research program, have developed the Smarter, Safer Homes (SSH) platform which has been trialled in homes across Australia. The SSH platform takes advantage of the latest wireless communication technologies in home and health monitoring sensors, to provide a smart home with consumer design interfaces and engagement of informal (e.g. family) support. This platform aggregates information from wireless sensors placed in a person's living environment to infer an individual profile of functional and health status to enable support from family members or carers and clinicians (Figure 1).

## Codesign Partners

Winnam Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation (WATSIC) is an enterprising community organisation that is a holistic service provider for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the Wynnum and Bayside Suburbs of Brisbane. WATSIC is a 100 per cent community-based and controlled, not-for-profit corporation that has approximately 40 properties that are used to provide affordable housing to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. WATSIC also owns and operates the only residential aged-care facility in Brisbane that caters specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the Georgina Margaret Davidson Thompson Hostel in Morningside.

Winnam takes its name from the Aboriginal word for pandanus palm and is situated on the traditional lands of the Quandamooka people, whose Country takes in the Moreton Bay Islands off the coast of Brisbane, Australia, plus the Brisbane Bayside areas from the mouth of the Brisbane River to the Logan River

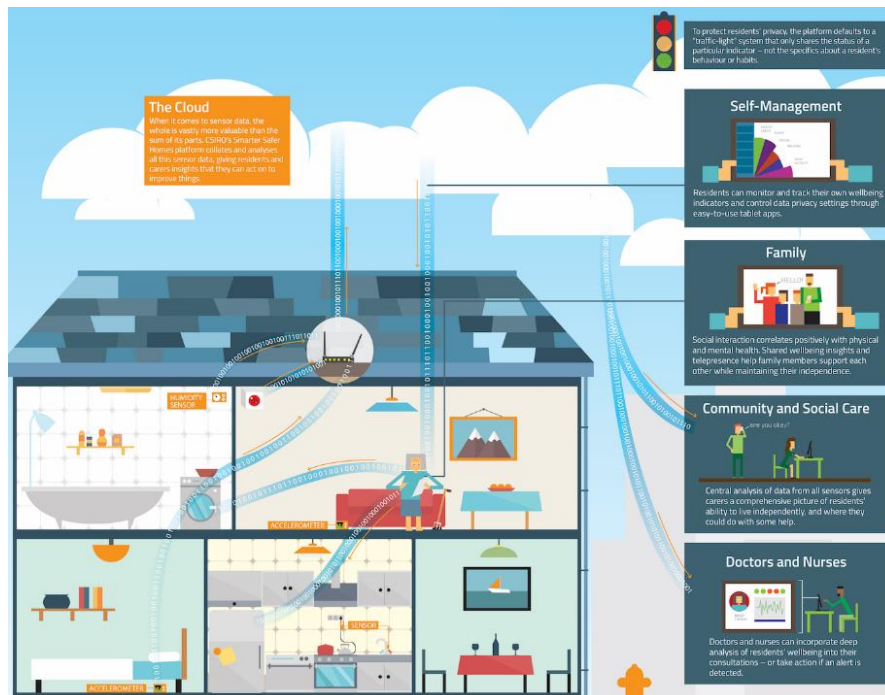
This scoping study was conducted to consider the use of SSH and its cultural appropriateness for urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people. Meetings were held in November 2019 that sought the perspectives of WATSIC Members and Georgina Hostel aged care staff on the feasibility to trial the SSH platform in WATSICs affordable houses and the Georgina Hostel.

## The Results

Georgina Hostel staff were curious and receptive to the concept of the SSH platform and could see value in the collection of data that would support the health and safety of the residents. Residents' possible discomfort and privacy concerns would need to be carefully addressed. WATSIC Members emphasised the significance of their family connections, shared culture, historical impacts, their privacy and health which strongly influence their daily decisions. Participants were receptive to the SSH platform and noted the potential for data to support preventative health steps. A trial must have a 'whole of community' approach and acknowledge the complexity of family situations and the historical experiences of many older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Recommendations from the scoping study were that planning should proceed for a trial of the SSH platform for WATSIC members and Georgina Hostel.

The CSIRO SSH platform is a passive activity monitoring system, without the need of intervention or interaction by residents, to capture their requirements for support and services. It is unobtrusive, flexible and low-maintenance and was designed to be interoperable with commercially available sensors and devices.

Figure 1: Sensors in a smart home and the Smarter Safer Homes platform



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