



RIGHT MOVE FOR EVERYONE

JANE PINDER

A NEW approach to tackling the under-occupancy of seniors living in public housing has proven a winner for residents such as Amber Mackness and Marlene Jarvis.

The 57-apartment \$15 million Caggara House recently opened in Mt Gravatt East as one of the state's first purpose-built developments aimed as a solution. Senior residents are relocated to more appropriate local housing, freeing up properties to help ease the waiting list of families desperate for larger homes.

Both Ms Mackness and Ms Jarvis were living alone in three-bedroom homes with large yards when they heard about Caggara House.

The words 'brand new units for seniors only' interested Ms Mackness.

"(Moving) was a gruelling experience at first but, when it was all over, you sat down and said 'thank goodness'. It was worthwhile," she said.

Ms Jarvis said she was pleased to move into her unit in March, after more than 20 years in her former home.

"I've been looking forward since last year to coming here. I

like the age group, 55 and over - that was a big factor in coming here," she said.

"I don't drive, so we have the buses on Logan Rd; I can get to any shopping centre I want to.

"It's just so handy to everything - the library, Curves, Coffee Club. I love the security of the place. I feel really safe."

Brisbane Housing Company (BHC) manages Caggara House, which has one-bedroom, one-bathroom units plus design features such as wide walkways and wheelchair and mobility scooter-friendly lifts. Chief executive David Cant said investigations were

now under way for a similar project on Brisbane's northside.

"It's very rare to have all one-bedrooms in a complex," Mr Cant said. "Normally we do studios as well, because by building smaller units we can make them more affordable and lower the rent.

"In this instance, because (residents) were people coming from predominantly three-bedroom houses, we thought to make them one-bedroom.

"We have really tried to make them stylish and attractive, and I think it's working if you gauge the reaction of the tenants."



HAPPY RESIDENTS: Marlene Jarvis and Amber Mackness (top) live in Caggara House, a new purpose-built seniors' unit development.