The Invisible Crisis: Women, Retirement, and Risk

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The Invisible Crisis

25%

Gender Super Gap at 60 (ASFA Nov, 2023)

18.3%

Median Gender Pay Gap (WGEA Nov, 2023)

44%

Single Women 45+ Renters.(HA, 2017)

58%

Single women 45+ receive rent assistance (AIHW, 2023)

38%

Women 45+ at risk of homelessness (ABS, 2021)

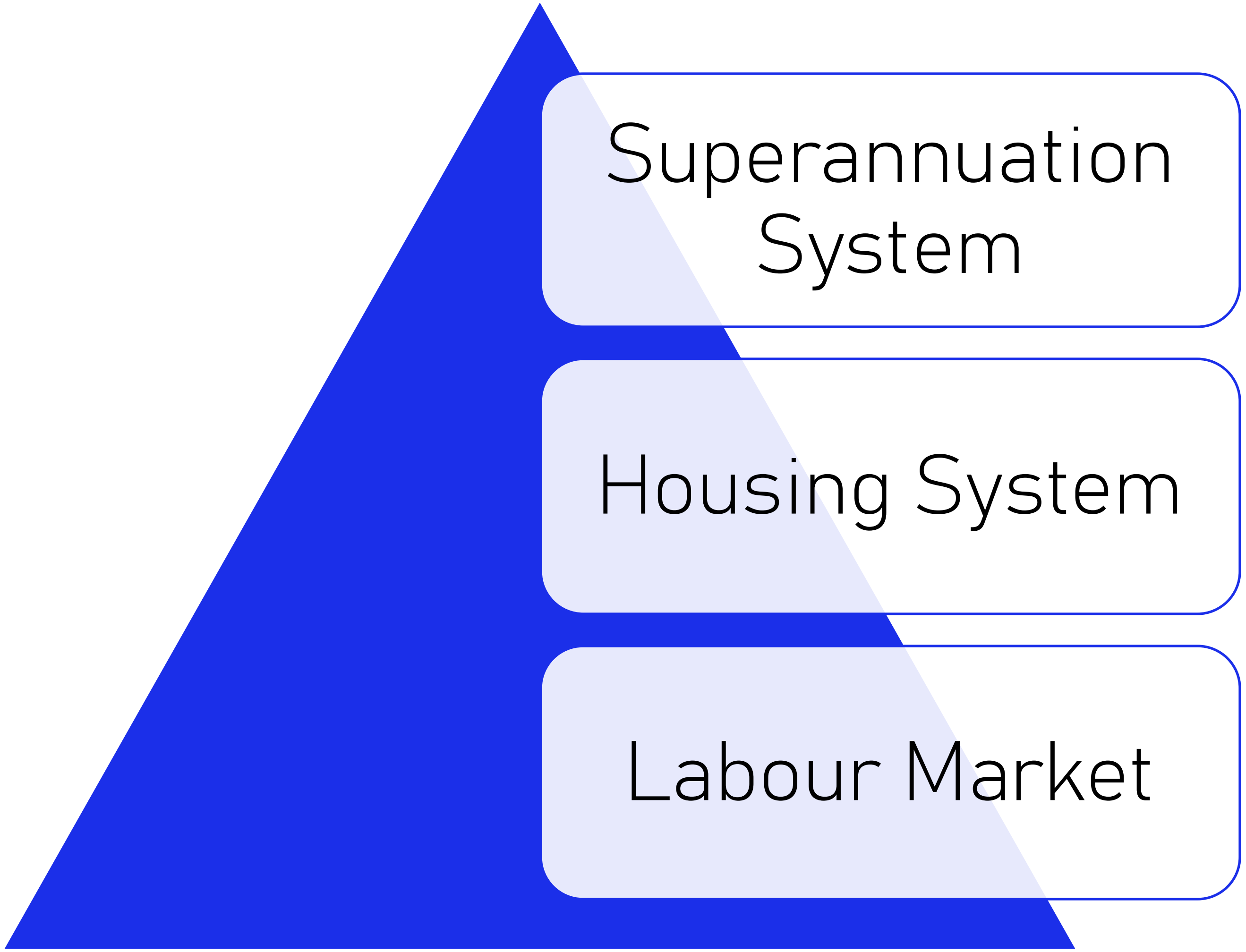
77%

Increase in women 55+ renting (ABS 2021)

78%

Retired (65+) single women renting, living in poverty (Grattan, 2025)

The Structural Problem

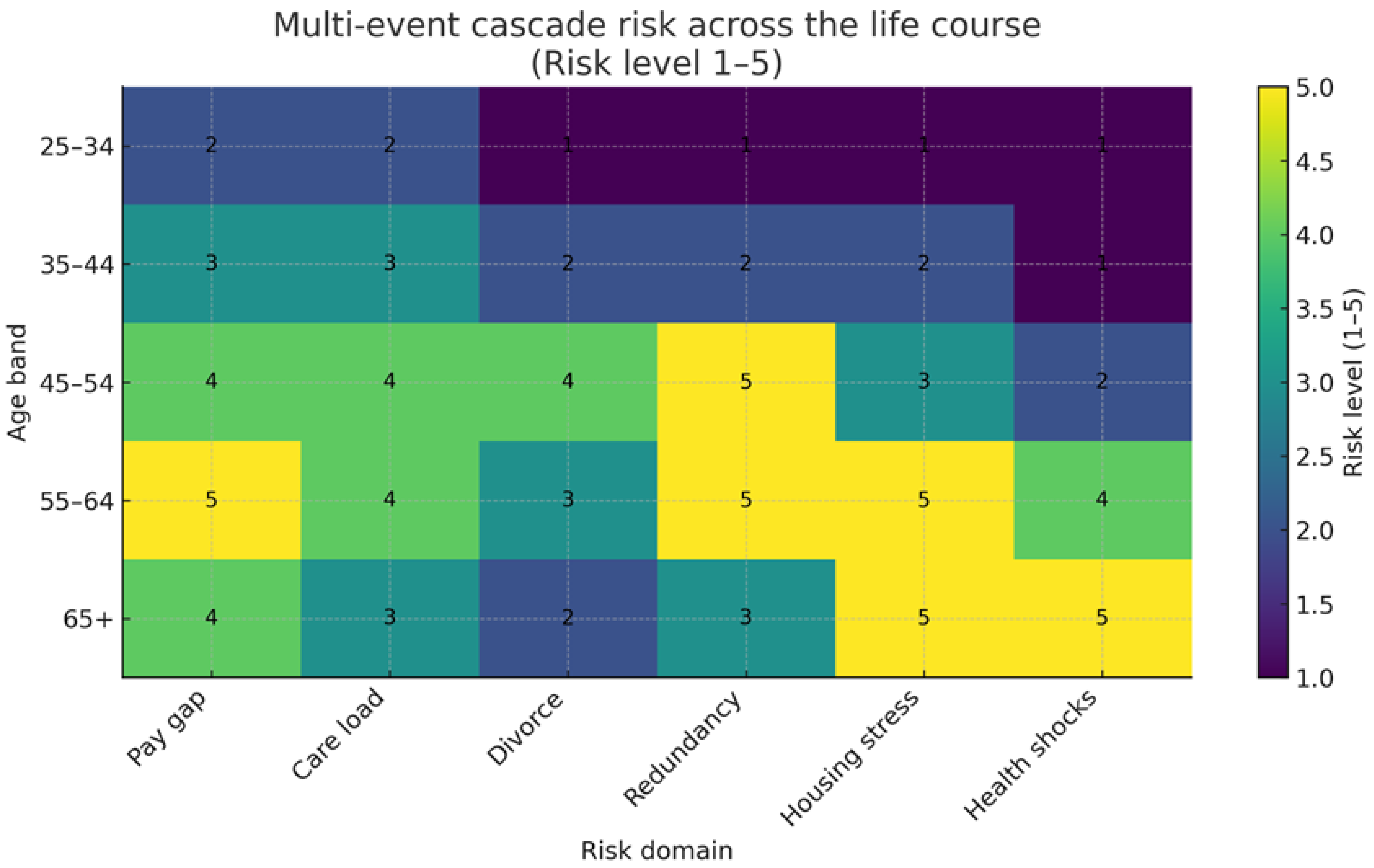


- Built for full-time continuous work
- Penalises career breaks

- Less homeownership for women
- Rising rents and insecure tenure

- High part-time and casual work
- More redundancies and income volatility

The not so invisible crisis… Cascading risk



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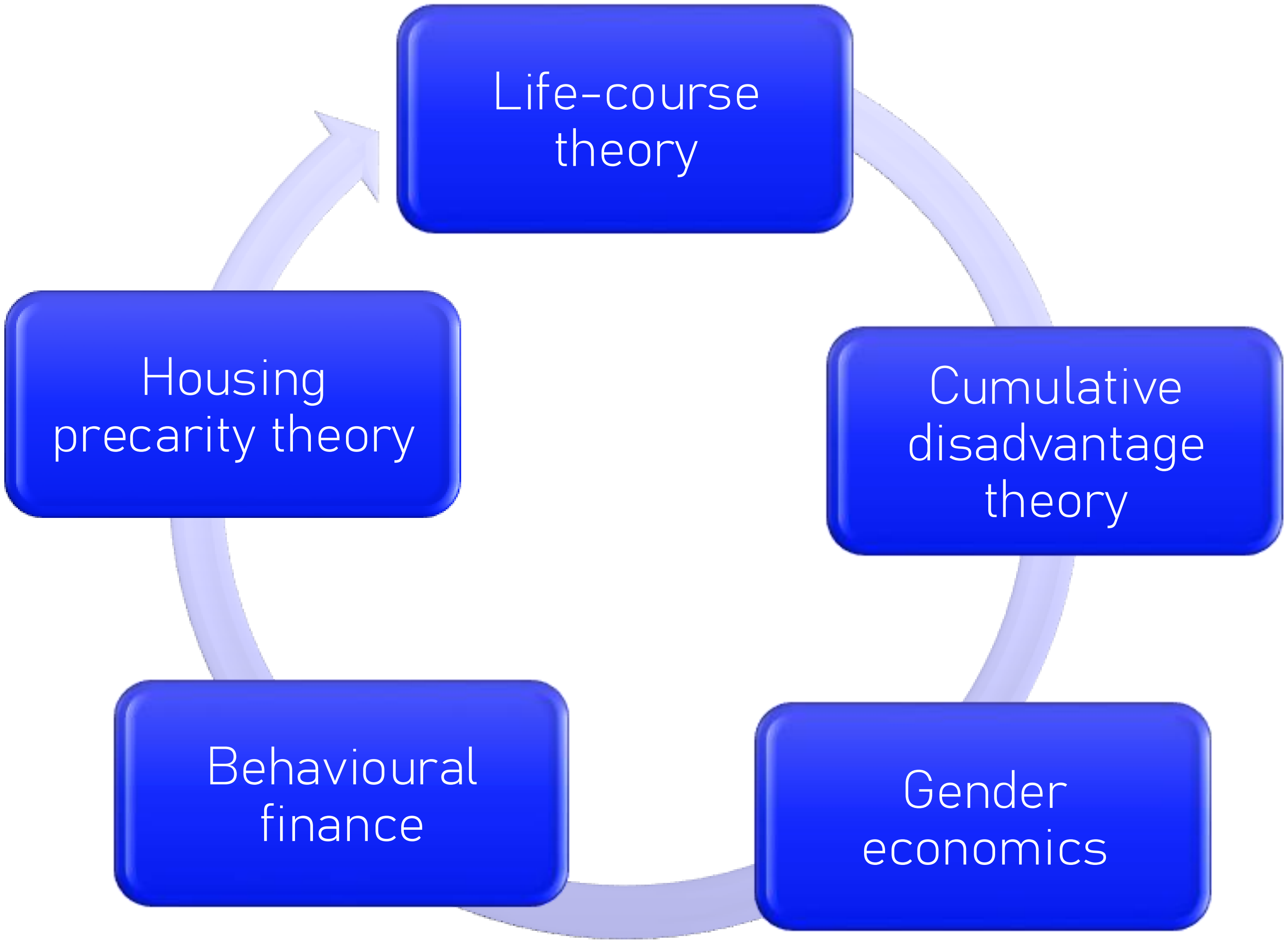
Theoretical Framework



Pathways, Mechanisms, and Propositions

Labour-Market

Low earnings → low contributions → low compounding → low retirement savings.

Housing

Long-term renting → high housing costs → no asset accumulation → elevated poverty risk in retirement.

Pathways, Mechanisms, and Propositions

Care

Unpaid caring responsibilities → career interruptions → slower wage growth → reduced lifetime super accumulation.

Longevity

Longer life expectancy → longer retirement duration → faster asset depletion → increased late-life poverty risk.

Pathways, Mechanisms, and Propositions

Behavioural

Low confidence & complexity aversion → reliance on defaults → reduced investment engagement → suboptimal long-term financial outcomes.

Financial Abuse

Financial control or relationship breakdown → sudden loss of assets/income → long-term financial instability → higher retirement risk.

Pathways, Mechanisms, and Propositions

Financial Literacy

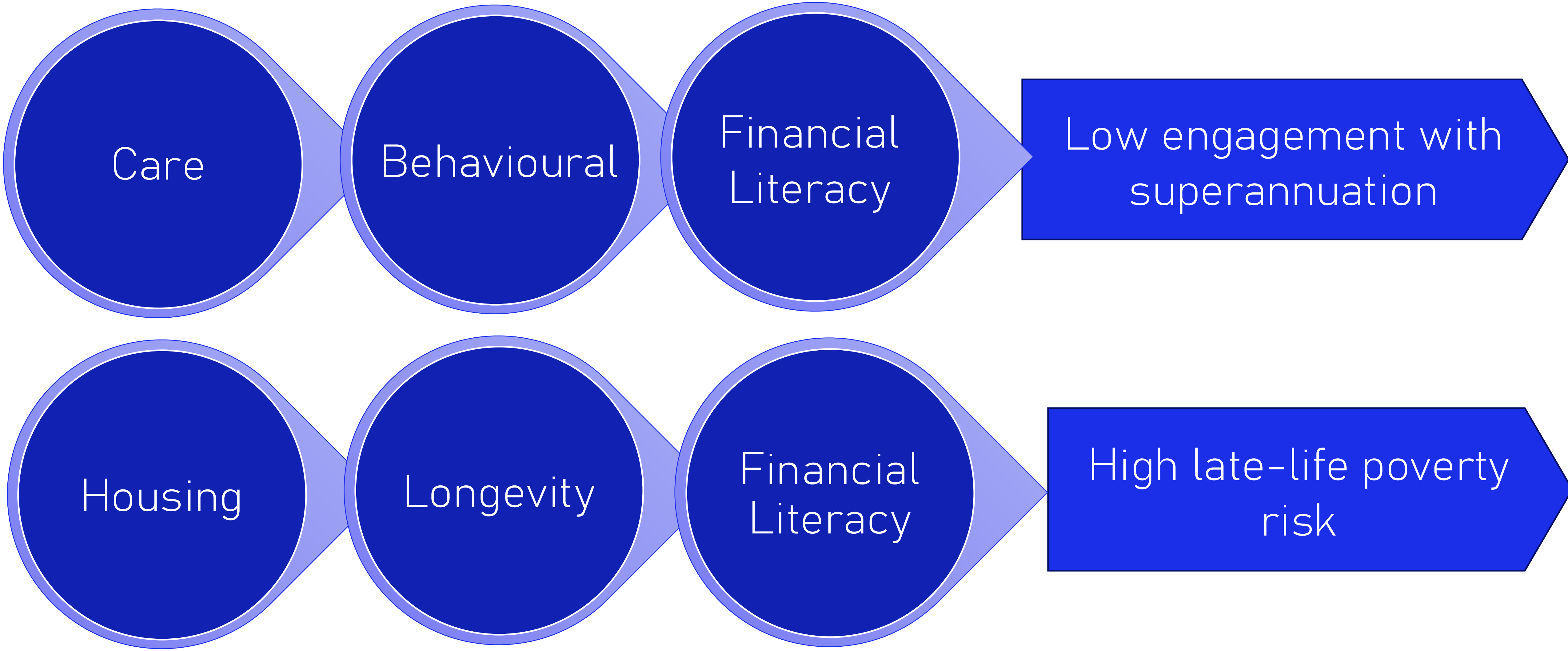
Poor financial literacy → difficulty navigating financial systems → limited voluntary saving & planning → heightened vulnerability in retirement.

How Pathways Reinforce Each Other

Labour-Market → Care → Early-career earnings loss

Labour-Market → Housing → Financial Literacy → Persistent renting + limited savings

How Pathways Reinforce Each Other



How Pathways Reinforce Each Other

Financial Abuse → Labour-Market Pathway → Housing → Forced financial reset

All Pathways Combined → Structural and intergenerational vulnerability

Systemic Solution: Longevity Retirement Security Index (LRSI)

Superannuation Data

Economic Data

Retirement Vulnerability

Housing Data

Social & Demographic Data

- Longitudinal modelling
- Risk trajectory estimation
- Scenario stress-testing
- Behavioural clustering/ cohort analysis

Systemic Solution: Longevity Retirement Security Index (LRSI)

Data harmonisation

Integrates ABS, WGEA, ASFA, ATO, AIHW, AIFS, CEPAR datasets
Builds gendered, life-event-aware, longitudinal records

Life-course predictive modelling

Machine learning and statistical models forecast individual/cross-cohort risk
Scenarios: divorce, redundancy, care, rental stress, health shocks

Policy simulation

Simulates policy reforms: carer credits, SG boosts, housing aid, re-entry programs
Tracks: super balances, housing stability, pension reliance

Interactive dashboard

Delivers actionable insights
Cohort risk heat maps and timelines
Member-level alerts and crisis trajectory flags for super funds/government

Identifies at-risk women cohorts and guides targeted retirement policy interventions

Conclusion

- Retirement inequality is the result of cumulative policy gaps, the end of a policy chain we can redesign.
- LRSI provides a pathway to early detection, structural reform, and gender-equitable policy.

Questions & Discussion

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