



# RETIREMENT VILLAGES ACT REVIEW

Submission by Neville Houghton



I have lived here since March 2013 and do not regret making the move but would be happier if these improvements were made:

## 1. HANDBOOK

All Retirement Villages should have an exhaustive and comprehensive handbook covering legislation, rules, costs, support, prohibitions, expectations ... i.e. all the information, in detail, that a resident might want.

Before I moved here the then manager assured me on many points of the advantages offered. Those have now been whittled away without consultation and without my approval, and always to my disadvantage and management's gain.

The HANDBOOK should contain:

- Copies of legislation
- Internal rules and regulations e.g. keeping of pets, access rights
- Costs (which must include details of how they are calculated and what variances exist)
- Support facilities available / provided
- Map of the campus
- Office hours
- Names and qualifications of staff
- Library facilities
- Security measures and requirements
- Insurance details showing what is covered and where residents are not covered
- Etc., etc., etc.

This handbook could well be available on line but a 'hard' copy must always be available in the library for use by people without computer skills AND it should be updated regularly while at the same time all residents should receive a memo telling them of the updates.

Chiefly a HANDBOOK is essential to facilitate TRANSPARENCY for residents, all of whom are old and most of whom are very mentally alert.

## 2. MANAGERS

There is no suitable course for managers but one needs to be established at TAFE level. Course content would include:

- Geriatric psychology (with stress on respect for the elderly)
- Geriatric sociology
- Accounting
- Communication
- First aid (and this needs to be updated regularly)
- Building and ground management
- Etc., etc., etc.

Once this is available it must be mandatory that managers have the qualification.

## 3. EXIT COSTS

It seems these are currently regarded as a slush fund for the owners even though they are called "Deferred Management Fees". Many people move to retirement villages as a matter of necessity and unwillingly accept that when they die, 30% of the value of their unit goes to the owners.

In the first place, 30% is too high!!!!

Although it is called "Deferred Management Fee" very little is done to improve facilities in the village. After 6 years I am now seeing some improvements here but they are largely improvements to enhance the capital value of the owner's investment, and they are very long overdue. Improvements are largely done by residents and at their own expense, these include such simple things as gardening and pruning.

No financial statement of "Deferred Management Fees" is ever presented for residents to inspect and this must be rectified.

## 4. COMMUNICATION

Because of age and debility residents should not have to go to a Community Centre to see notices even though it ought to be mandatory that all village based information should be communicated. Notices could well be available on line, but for the computer illiterate they must be printed out and placed in letter boxes. Above all it must be recognised that management telling one or two people and then relying on the gossip system, is only selective and distorted communication – it is not communication at all.

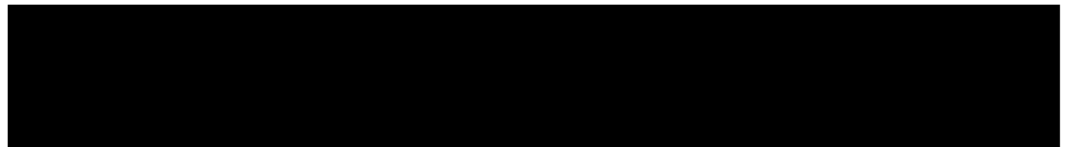
## 5. OMBUDSMAN

Most villages have a 'disputes' system, but like all internally controlled systems they are subliminally controlled by bias and conservatism in order to ensure that management gets its own way.

**There needs to be an ombudsman to whom unsatisfied disputes in retirement villages can be referred.**

The aged want quiet and peaceful lives and can only have that if they are **free from abuse**, and being persistently overruled by management is abuse.

**TRANSPARENCY AND RESPECT FOR RESIDENTS** must be the chief objectives of a new Act.



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