

ARQRV CONNECT

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The Association of Residents of Queensland Retirement Villages is the voice of residents in the Queensland retirement village industry



Presidents' Ponderings



Judy Mayfield

Well, this is our last Newsletter for 2019, I don't know about you, but the year seems to have gone so quickly I have hardly had the time to catch up. The AGM in September had 49 members attending with 29 apologies, well down on last year but it was informative with three officers from the Department of Housing and Public Works attending as well as Kim Teudt, Chair of the Qld

Retirement Living Council. Kim spoke at some length about the Accreditation Standards for operators being introduced and you will find out more about these Standards in a later article. The 2020 AGM will be held on the northside.

The Annual Report is available on our website, if you would like a hard-copy posted to you please contact Jan in the office on 0429 098 417

New membership fees were approved, and you will find detailed information further on. As the membership year has changed to 1st March to 28th February, annual fees for 2020 year are not due to be paid until 1 March 2020. Current annual members will receive an extension to their membership until

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Contact ARQRV to receive your free copy of the new Residents Committee Manual (one free copy per village)

Extra copies are available for \$38.50 each (includes printing and postage).

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March 2020. We are still waiting

for the final amendments to the *Retirement Villages Act 1999* to be rolled out in November, these will be around greater transparency for financial information for residents. This is an important change and we wait to see exactly what it will contain.

Amendments associated with:

- sale of a village;
- closure of a village; and
- redevelopment of a village.

These forms have now been drafted and waiting for the final stage of Government approval, when released we will provide you with more details. There is certainly greater expectation that operators will keep residents more informed about these matters.

There is a lot of information in this newsletter, so I hope you enjoy the read.

I will take this opportunity to wish you and your families are very Merry Christmas and a healthy and fun-filled New Year.

With best wishes from all ARQRV Committee and staff

Judy Mayfield

Did you know....Any member with questions about their membership or membership renewal can contact our friendly office staff, Jan and Carol by phoning the ARQRV office on 0429 098 417 between 9am and 2:30pm Monday to Friday.

Retirement Living Summit 2019



I recently spent two days at the Retirement Living Summit on the Gold Coast. This is an annual conference hosted by the Property Council and the President of each State Residents Association is invited to participate. The theme for the conference was “Raising the bar” and with the Royal Commission into Aged Care, the introduction by the industry of a Code of Conduct and an Accreditation scheme there was a lot to talk about. The interim

report from the Royal Commission was discussed and the take home message from the panel of providers was that:

Trust in both retirement villages and aged care is being undermined by the findings of the Royal Commission – providers must be careful what they promise and then over-deliver to rebuild it.

The Retirement Living Council has been working over the last 2 years to develop a Code of Conduct that provides a baseline for the behaviour of operators of a retirement village. Implementation will commence on 1 January 2020. The objectives of the Code are to:

- Promote and protect the interests of current and future residents
- Help implement regulation in a way that creates high and consistent standards regarding the sales

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and operation of retirement communities that are above and beyond statutory obligations

- Promote trust and confidence in the sector
- Provide a framework to assist open, transparent and efficient resolution of complaints by residents against signatories to the Code.
- Provide industry leadership to promote effective self-regulation that complements and builds on existing regulatory arrangement.

The Code will be implemented in stages and operators will sign up for the Code on a voluntary basis. Residents in those villages will be active participants and will be able to report breaches, should they occur, direct to an independent Code Administrator, who has just been employed.

ARQRV is interested in receiving feedback from residents in villages where the Code has

been implemented. As it is not compulsory we are keen to see industry take-up. To date 1000 villages across Australia have indicated that they will participate.

Successful implementation of the Code will be a step towards full Accreditation.

All State Presidents participated in a panel discussion on *Raising the Bar for Residents*. The opening question was *What are current resident priorities for industry action based on your membership concerns over the last 12 months*. We had some interesting issues raised for discussion. However, one of our main concerns was that, while we can give our full support to the introduction of a Code of Conduct and an Accreditation Scheme WHO WILL PAY FOR IT.

We were clear that it should not be the residents, operators were not so keen to commit, so this will be a major focus in our discussions with operators in the coming year. Having all State Associations arguing for the same thing will give us a much stronger voice.

Two international keynote speakers each provided a different perspective on service delivery and on village developments. Lynne Katzman, CEO Juniper Communities (USA) talked about an integrated model of health/ancillary services delivery and Graham Wilkinson, owner and Director of Generus Group NZ gave a relaxed and layback presentation which belied his obvious entrepreneurial and business skills. Both challenged operators to think differently about what is possible. Two other keynote speakers provided a different challenge, Jane Fleming, former Olympic champion, gave an inspiring presentation on what it takes to really succeed in any endeavour – she talked about passion, commitment, consistency, being willing to do whatever it takes and gave some great examples of athletes who excelled in their sport despite the barriers they had faced. Rob Fyfe, former CEO of Air New Zealand, provided an engaging story of how he was able to move Air New Zealand from being one of the least respected airlines in the world to the high standard of recognition it now enjoys. His message - find the one thing that you can do well and build on it.



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Lots of other great presentations and the opportunity to meet with the State Presidents of NSW, ACT and Victoria and to network with industry representatives. ARQRV has a very



visible profile in the sector, we are highly regarded by our colleagues and industry respects that we are working alongside them to build a retirement living community that values and supports people living in a village. I believe we have come a long way over the last few years in our dealings with operators. I am sure that there will always be issues in villages when residents are treated unfairly but I also believe that there is a genuine recognition by many operators (not all) that they should be doing better by the people living in their villages to whom they provide a service – not just a building in which to live.

The retirement village industry is changing. I look forward to the next 12 months as we see changes begin to happen. When I can report back to the operators that the number of issues we deal with has declined dramatically then we will know that their reforms are working and not just because they have been legislated by Government.

Judy Mayfield

Membership Information & Fees

Several members have contacted us seeking clarification about their membership and fees. Classes of membership, as defined in our Constitution, are listed below along with a brief explanation and the fees payable.

CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP

Ordinary Member

This applies to anyone living in a village who has a right to reside. Membership is per accommodation unit and not per person. Two people living in a unit are both members, but there is only one vote per villa at ARQRV General meetings.

Annual fees are due on 1 March each year and must be paid by 31 March otherwise the person loses their member status and must pay the joining along with the annual fee if they wish to re-join. This is non-negotiable. If joining for the first time or a lapsed member, it is \$57 to join for 12 months (includes a \$22 joining fee). If a new annual member joins after September a six-month fee of \$39.50 applies (includes the \$22 joining fee) and then the annual fee of \$35 becomes due on 1 March.

Financial Life Member

Any resident of a retirement village can join as a lifetime member for a fee of \$300 payable at any time during the year. No membership fees are payable again.

Associate Member

This class of membership allows a family member who may not be

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living nearby to receive our newsletters or contact us for general information so as to keep informed of what is happening in the retirement village sector so that they are more able to support their parents if need be. This is unlikely to be of interest to family members close by if they have access to the information we send to members. It is also not necessary for a family member to be an Associate member in the event of the death of a current ARQRV member as we will continue to work with the family until a satisfactory settlement of exit entitlement is negotiated.

Secondly, we will assist anyone who is an Associate member considering a move into a village by providing basic information and suggesting questions to consider asking the salesperson.

An Associate member can transition to full membership once they have moved into a village. If joining for the first time \$57 to join for 12 months. Renewal \$35 per year due 1 March.

If a new Associate member joins after September a six-month fee of \$39.50 applies and then the annual fee of \$35 becomes due on 1 March.

Fees are current as at September 2019. Please contact ARQRV or visit our website www.arqrv.org.au if you have any further queries.

Membership Support Officers

ARQRV is represented by a network of **Membership Support Officers** (MSOs) each based within their own retirement village. They are the day to day face of ARQRV and a conduit between members and the ARQRV committee.

ARQRV strives to enlist an MSO in every retirement village where there are existing members. Sadly, this is not always the case, and some retirement villages are without an MSO.

The role of the MSO is essentially to raise the profile of ARQRV within their retirement village. This is mainly achieved by ensuring there is a supply of ARQRV brochures readily available to residents in a common area, such as your village community hall or clubhouse. MSOs are encouraged to assist residents with new and existing ARQRV memberships. The role of an MSO does not include getting involved with any issue a resident may have with the scheme operator or manager.

MSOs should enjoy talking to people, be confident in handling small amounts of cash and have an email address for corresponding with the ARQRV office.

All resources required to undertake the role of MSO are supplied by ARQRV. This includes, brochures, membership forms, newsletters, a laminated poster to advertise yourself as the MSO for your village, a list of current village members, a MSO badge, receipt book, reply-paid envelopes, a supply of personalised introduction letters (handy for introducing new residents to ARQRV) and any other material you may require. You will also receive a handy **ARQRV carry bag** and a **comprehensive instruction handbook**.

The ARQRV office is only a phone call away and will assist you with any queries or concerns.

If your village does not have a MSO and you are interested in becoming the MSO, please contact **Jan or Carol** at the ARQRV office on **0429 098 417** (Monday to Friday) between 8:30am and 3:30pm.

New Quality Standards of Service

At our AGM in September Kim Teudt, Chairperson of the Retirement Living Council Qld Committee, (RLC) spoke about the new quality standards that the industry is introducing. Whilst these are not mandatory the RLC is hopeful that they will be adopted by all operators across Australia. Read the article below that appeared in the Western Australia 'Australian' newspaper:

A new framework for the operation of retirement communities has been rolled out to offer standardised levels of service to residents.



*Following extensive consideration and evaluation of feedback received from industry and stakeholders, the **Australian Retirement Village Accreditation Scheme (ARVAS)** was designed by Property Council of Australia and Leading Age Services Australia (LASA).*

*Property Council Retirement Living Executive Director Ben Myers said ARVAS, which is supported by the Retirement Living Code of Conduct, had been **designed to reflect the expectations of current and future residents.***

"The seven ARVAS categories of standards reflect all elements of a resident's retirement living experience, from their signing of a contract, to moving in and their eventual departure," he said.

"Through our research and consultation, residents told us they would value a scheme that evaluated their community on its ability to provide safety and security, the quality of its village manager and staff and the clarity of the community entry and exit procedures."

*"ARVAS contains updated, modern standards relating to each of these, and **residents can be confident an ARVAS-accredited community will deliver on its promise.**"*

LASA Chief Executive Officer Sean Rooney said it was the first time care and personal services had been included in the retirement living sector's accreditation standards.

"With more retirement villages either providing or facilitating the delivery of care-related services, it made sense to ensure our accreditation scheme reflected this evolution in the retirement living sector," he said.

"A diverse and experienced group of industry professionals has consulted extensively on the development of these new standards, and we encourage the entire industry to take up the scheme."

"The fact this scheme has widespread support in the industry demonstrates the commitment of operators to provide high-quality services to older Australians."

ARVAS will be operated by Quality Innovation Performance (QIP), a not-for-profit provider of independent accreditation services.

*QIP Chief Executive, Dr Stephen Clark, said **achieving ARVAS accreditation would demonstrate participating villages were meeting national industry standards and providing safe and quality living environments for residents, while working towards meeting relevant state or territory legislation.***



ARQRV Village Visits

ARQRV's authorised representatives regularly visit retirement villages, to address interested residents about **changes to retirement village legislation**, and **how ARQRV benefits members**. The presentation usually lasts for about an hour.

ARQRV lobbies government and the industry to advance and protect the rights and interests of **all residents in Queensland retirement villages**, not just our members.

ARQRV representatives regularly meet with industry leaders, and have permanent representation on the Ministerial Housing Council, chaired by the Honourable Mick de Brenni MP, Minister for Housing and Public Works.



Formed in 1992, ARQRV has a sound knowledge of the retirement village sector, the legislation governing retirement villages and residence contracts. **ARQRV provides specialist support** and assistance to members who have problems with their village operator. We also assist the families of members who are dealing with the sale of an accommodation unit. We **keep our members informed** of topical issues through regular printed and electronic newsletters. ARQRV provides specialist advice and information to subscribing **residents committees** about budgets and other matters relative to their role. We also advise residents in villages wishing to establish a residents committee. You may wish to peruse our website to see more about our work for residents.

If you would like ARQRV to give a presentation to residents in your village, please obtain any necessary authorisations, and call **0437 906 074** or email enquiries@arqrv.org.au to arrange a suitable date and time.

Annual Membership Renewals

Important Change

Annual Membership Renewals are now due on 1st March each year.

(Any annual membership not renewed by 31st March will lapse and you will need to rejoin as a new member).

If you are a Life Member—you do not need to renew your membership.

To renew your ARQRV annual membership simply visit our website at www.arqrv.org.au and follow the links under the membership button; or

Phone the office on **0429 098 417** and pay by credit card; or

Post your cheque to **PO Box 5057 Brendale Qld 4500**

ARQRV appreciates your support.

2019/2020 ARQRV COMMITTEE:

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Gus Hatter

OFFICE STRUCTURE:

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FOR ALL GENERAL ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT A COMMITTEE MEMBER

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Ph: 0437 906 074

NOTE: *Office hours may vary, if there is no answer, please leave a clear voice message and you call will be returned at the earliest convenience.*

