

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

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



**ARQVR is the
Association of Residents
of Queensland
Retirement Villages.**

**We work to ensure your
voice is heard and your
rights protected
as a resident, whether
you are a pensioner or
an independent retiree.**

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Reflecting on the past year I feel very positive about the things that ARQVR has achieved. As you will see by the reports in this document we have taken on and been successful in all that we have set out to do. Our members have moved, not without some hesitation, to accept meetings via video conferencing (Zoom) and we are also trialling presenting our village visit sessions using a video that was professionally filmed a couple of years ago, followed on by a live Q & A via Zoom. As travel and accommodation costs increase this may be a way forward for us to connect with villages in regional Queensland.

Our initiative to provide specific support and education to residents' committees resulted in the establishment of the Committee Support Desk. This offers the opportunity to Support Desk members to arrange an individual meeting with a committee member to access information and resources that will assist them to become more effective in their role. Additionally, we now facilitate quarterly Statewide meetings and it is great to have residents committees join us from villages around Queensland. Our thanks to staff from the Regulatory Services Unit, Department of Housing, who attend every meeting and willingly answer questions from these committees. Thanks too to Danielle Lim, solicitor who also attends and, whilst not giving legal advice, offers a legal overview on the issues being discussed.

A few years ago ARQVR wrote *Guidelines for Village Managers working with*

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AGENDA

10am Opening and Welcome

1. Attendance and apologies
2. Minutes of previous meeting—as circulated
3. Business arising from minutes

4. Reports

5. General business
6. Guest speaker
7. Election of incoming committee
8. Closure of meeting

President's Report continued from previous page...

Residents Committees, (reviewed and approved by both the Department of Housing and the Retirement Living Council). This was developed into a Village Manager Pack to include other useful information for village managers. This pack is now well accepted by the industry and many of the larger organisations are ordering multiple packs to distribute to each of their villages.

It is clear that villages with an effective residents committee who have a strong, working relationship with the village manager have much fewer on-going problems in their village. Issues and concerns are dealt with and quickly resolved through negotiation and a preparedness to give and take on both sides.

We have also been facilitating regular Zoom meetings with the Membership Support Officers (MSOs) across the State. These meetings provide a great opportunity for MSOs to network and to discover more about how other villages work.

At the beginning of the year, we farewelled Mike Fairbairn who after 9 years working with village disputes resigned for a well-deserved retirement. We thank him most sincerely for his hard work and commitment to ARQRV over the years.

We were fortunate to be able to welcome Mark Richards, solicitor, who has taken on the disputes portfolio as a volunteer in an advisory capacity. Mark, whilst not working as a solicitor in his role with ARQRV, brings a wealth of experience in the retirement living sector and our members have already benefitted from his knowledge and ability to work through and resolve issues.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who work tirelessly, in a volunteer capacity, to make sure that ARQRV provides accurate information and services that benefits all our members. To all committee members a big THANK YOU and to all those people not on the committee who work in the background doing an amazing job, my heartfelt thanks also to you. To our two office staff, without you ARQRV could not be as efficient as we are, we probably never say it but you are truly appreciated.

Finally, to staff from the Residential Services Unit, Department of Housing and to all the Village Operators who have reached out to us offering support and being prepared to listen to what we have to say, we welcome and respect the support you have offered to us.

We are truly are, the *Voice of Residents in Queensland Retirement Villages*.

Judy Mayfield / President ARQRV



JUDY MAYFIELD

TREASURER'S REPORT



LES AMBOR

The accounts for Financial Year 2022-23 show a net loss of \$27,235, against the budgeted loss of \$55,377.

The Association's funds were again assisted by the second tranche of the BCC Funding Grant of \$26,268, which accounted for a significant part of the gain against budget. We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Department of Housing.

Our subscription income totalled \$103,819, although the budgeted income was less at \$89,530. The increase was partially due to the increase in the prices of our subscriptions in October last year. Another factor was the increase in the upgrade to life subscriptions which were \$14,437, compared with the budgeted \$3,850.

The product sales and support desk contributed \$9,126 against the budget of \$5,600. The Guidelines for Managers contributed \$4,409 to this income stream.

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Our operating expenditure was \$7,199 under budget at \$169,783. Apart from our salaries expenses, the major expenditures were in IT (\$16,919), newsletter production and postage (\$9,930) and office lease (\$18,218). Travel costs of \$4,898 were expended by four members of the committee, who individually visited a number of villages throughout the year to provide information and assistance to resident committees.

At the end of June, our balance sheet showed that our net assets were \$331,614, including two term deposits totalling \$281,383.

The 2023/24 budget predicts a loss of \$77,232, after allowing for the third tranche of the BCC Grant.

The ARQRV is an essential part of the Queensland Retirement Village scene. It provides checks and balances on the relationships between residents and operators. It also provides a range of services to its members and engages frequently with the Department and other organisations.

The Association primarily relies on residents for its funding, but it is a fact of life that the majority of residents do not recognise the role that the Association plays on their behalf and that is limiting our funding. In this respect, we cannot understate our appreciation for the BCC Grants.

Les Ambor / Treasurer



RESIDENTS COMMITTEE SUPPORT DESK REPORT



RAY JORDAN

The Support Desk, a subscription-based specialist information and assistance service, provides information and assistance to residents about matters relevant to the role of residents committees, but especially those topics included in the Residents Committee Manual and in the Village Financials guideline.

The main focus in the last 12 months has been assisting, to varying degrees, numerous working groups of residents in villages across the state updating or establishing their residents constitutions. In many cases, drafts were based on the comprehensive Model Residents Constitution developed by ARQRV.

Another recurring theme for villages required advice about procedures where a residents committee cannot be established or is unable to continue functioning. Village budgetary advice, at diverse levels, was provided by Les Ambor (ARQRV Treasurer) to numerous subscribing villages.



Many subscribers to the Support Desk participated in quarterly Committee Forums held using Zoom (an audio and visual electronic communications platform). At these forums, participants learned about the progress of legislative amendments relating to the transparency of village financials, by senior officers of the Qld Department of Housing. Mark Richards, Solicitor (Mediation and Disputes Officer of ARQRV) introduced himself; and assisted many participants with authoritative advice on various topics. There were also presentations by Danielle Lim and Naz Pattison (solicitors at DSL Law) at different sessions about topical retirement village matters. Steven Autry (Insurance Professional, Lockton Australia, Insurance Brokers) gave an insight into the challenges facing operators sourcing reasonable cost village insurance. Megan Hobson (formerly, Code Administrator, Retirement Living Code of Conduct) explained the practicalities of the Code, from the operator's perspective.

Ray Jordan / Project Officer

BUDGET ASSISTANCE REPORT

Part of my function on the ARQRV Committee is to assist resident committees with their understanding and interpretation of their village budgets and financial accounts. Over the past year, I liaised with some fifteen resident committees in that regard. Here I present the most common issues raised.

The lack of understanding of S107, particularly in respect to wages, continues to be a problem at management and senior management levels, even in the larger operators. Operators are paying more attention to staff training, but this is one aspect of the Act that needs more attention.

There currently seems to be an over reliance on Quantity Surveyors' reports, when operators set the MRF budgets. The Act places the responsibility on the Scheme Operator, but some are tending to use the QS reports as the bible. That should not be the case. In fact, the first draft of the proposed regulations published two years ago, underlines this by stipulating that the operator can add expenditure in the MRF budget to that outlined by the Quantity Surveyor.

QS reports are generally prepared well before the MRF budgets are finalised and much can change in that time. Additionally, it is the Operator who should be ensuring that there are sufficient funds in the MRF, not only in the budget year, but also over the next ten years. I have seen QS reports that fail in this respect and do not properly account for the increases in the cost of supplies and repairs in the current environment.

Further, we are experiencing times where it is even difficult to obtain quotes, let alone locate contractors prepared to undertake repairs at a reasonable cost.

At best, the QS report is a guide. It does not take in to account the expenditure in the current year. When setting the MRF budget, the scheme operator should assess the forecast expenditure in the current year, as well as the actuals in the previous couple of years. MRF expenditure is anything but consistent. Plumbing repairs can be up one year, but down the next and so on.



If a QS report is to act as a guideline as an operational document, then the expenditure should be split in to two segments. The first would cover scheduled maintenance. The second would then cover the unexpected repairs. Scheduled maintenance would cover programmed maintenance on such items as lifts, cold rooms, electrical leads, fire equipment, pool equipment, pest control and so on. By specifically listing the scheduled maintenance, the operator and resident committees can monitor the programs through the quarterly financials.

Finally, may I address the problems surrounding the application of surpluses to reduce fees. The current interpretation is not serving the residents as I think the Department intended.

Applying surpluses to monthly fees means that discounting has to be recovered in the following year's budget, which means those fee increases will most likely be more than CPI.

I have seen three examples in the past few months where residents have been distressed by fee increases they were not anticipating. Bear in mind that over a third of our residents are pensioners, who basically plan their expenditure around their costs today. Their cash flow may limit their ability to plan for unexpected fee increases that are caused by this interpretation.

But, more important is that if a budget exceeds CPI and is put to the vote, it may well be that a No vote succeeds. What are the options for the operator then?

Effectively, he has to reduce the S106 expenses and that may be by eliminating security or by reducing maintenance staff or eliminating emergency call systems. Whichever the reduction, it is a reduction of services for residents.

To make matters worse, the operator is not obliged to put the revised budget to its residents, as the s106

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increases will be under CPI. There is no provision in the Act that prevents an operator from reducing services. I would suggest that that is not what the majority of residents would want to see as the result.

A better system is to allow disbursements, be that one only, or a number throughout the year. Either way, the bank balance for residents will be the same at the end of the year. But this way, income keeps up with expenditure and there will be no resident angst and operators won't be forced to reduce services.

In closing, I believe we are seeing Operators generally working much closer with resident committees and that can only be a positive for our residents.

Les Ambor / Treasurer

MEDIATION and DISPUTES (MaD) REPORT



MARK RICHARDS

Since taking on the role in January this year I have dealt with 14 disputes on behalf of members. Of the 14 matters, one matter was a continuation from last calendar year with the ARQRV only dealing with 13 new matters. That is 1.4 matters per month if my math proves correct. This is substantially down from the matters brought to the attention of the ARQRV in previous years.

As to the inherited matter, the operator manages several villages. The issue involves the apportionment of the insurance cost amongst several villages under a Global Policy compared to if the operator had individual policies for each village. This is one matter the ARQRV has supported as the outcome may impact many villages and residents. This matter has been listed for a Hearing in late September in QCAT. Watch this space.

I am pleased to advise you that all of the new matters (that is 13 of them) have been resolved to the satisfaction of the members.

The new matters covered a mixed bag of topics such as:-

- Spouse Licences
- Reinstatement costs on exiting a Village
- The operator's requirement for a resident to sign a Deed of Alterations and Additions in relation to the installation of solar panels on common property with the legal costs being payable by the resident
- Exit entitlements
- The village operator proposing to set up childminding facilities
- Responsibility for trees on the common property compared to in a resident's lot
- Water charges and the cost of installing new meters.



In many instances, the issues were resolved by explaining and clarifying the resident's rights and obligations. In other instances, conversations were held with the operator's staff to resolve a misunderstanding. On a couple of occasions, more direct intervention was required by meeting with the operator.

Why are the number of disputes down from previous years? My take is that residents have a better understanding of their rights and obligations. Also, I have seen a general trend with the behaviour of operators improving and being prepared to engage in and discuss issues. This is particularly the case when the ARQRV is involved.

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Your ARQRV has gained in my opinion the respect of operators and government departments alike. There is a general acknowledgment that the ARQRV will support its members but in a way that is conciliatory with a view to resolving issues in a common-sense way.

There is ongoing dialogue and collaboration between the ARQRV and the Department of Housing as well as the industry bodies that represent operators.

Also, as the population ages, politicians and departments are becoming more aware of the importance of the older demographic. The positive impact of the Royal Commission has been a catalyst for a change in how operators engage with their residents.

There are some operators who are dragging their heels. But that is why you have the ARQRV who will always be prodding them along.

Mark Richards / Mediation and Disputes (MaD)



SECRETARY'S REPORT

After retiring from the role of Office Manager in late 2021, I was appointed to the role of ARQRV Secretary. I also report at the monthly committee meetings on the information received from the office staff.

As a condition of the \$25K grant currently received from the Qld Government Dept of Housing and awarded for 4 years, I produce a detailed quarterly report listing the activities and outcomes of the work carried out by committee members and staff over the 3-month period. This includes activity on the ARQRV website, newsletters and other information posted and emailed to members, online meetings with Residents Committees and Membership Support Officers, meetings attended with government and industry, number of promotional village visits and the total number of village residents attending, and the number of telephone hours dealing with resident's queries. With 5,500 individual members, a significant number of hours are spent on the phone as well as the time taken to respond to member's emails.

During August, the ARQRV President, Judy Mayfield and I spent a week visiting 8 of the registered retirement villages in the Rockhampton and Yeppoon area. These visits were attended by a total of 141 residents plus their village managers. It was great to meet and connect with members in that region as we have never travelled there in the past. Thanks to all village residents who made us feel so welcome.

For the financial year 2022 to 2023, some ARQRV committee members attended 16 villages across Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast speaking to some 600 residents, both members and non-members, and promoting ARQRV and the benefits of membership. Other ARQRV committee members had face-to-face meetings with 40 residents' committees and their members. ARQRV committee members and staff also held seven online Zoom meetings for Residents Committees and Membership Support Officers. These involved over 206 members. In total, we have spent more than 300 hours on the phone dealing with over 3,300 calls and that is not mentioning the uncounted hours in front of our various computers.

It has been a productive and successful year for the Association.

Jan Sullivan / ARQRV Secretary



JAN SULLIVAN

MEMBERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION REPORT



LAURIE SUMMERVILLE

The year 2022 / 2023 has seen many of our members and villages returning to more face-to-face social interactions. ARQRV recommenced village promotional visits during 2023, with several villages being visited by members of our committee.

The Brendale office has undertaken several campaigns and initiatives to help support our members, Residents Committees and Membership Support Officers (MSOs) while seeking to gain new members. The ARQRV database has undergone several changes, to allow us to grow with our membership. Our Information Technology support, Cody Heit from SACKO-Burpengary, again deserves thanks for his patience and management of such a large database. We do appreciate him dealing with our issues, requests, and additions to the database.

We continued to use video conferencing via Zoom to hold quarterly meetings with our MSOs and Residents Committees. These meetings have continued to grow in popularity, and we would like to thank all those who participated. We would also like to thank our guest speakers from the Department of Housing, DSL Law, Insurance Industry and Aged and Disability Advocacy (ADA) Australia for their presentations and involvement. These meetings have received very positive feedback from participants and play an important part in our association.

At the end of June 2023, we had 5475 individual current financial members. This is slightly less than the full membership figure of 5568 from last year.

We supplied 28 of the ARQRV Residents Committee Manuals during 2022/2023 and 28 of the ARQRV Village Manager Packs to various village managers and/or group operators during the same period.

| RECONCILIATION OF MEMBERS | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------|-------|
| Member Type | Main Member | Partner | Total |
| LIFE | 2749 | 1305 | 4054 |
| ANNUAL | 1072 | 344 | 1416 |
| ASSOCIATE | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| | 3826 | 1649 | 5475 |

A total of 65 village residents committees subscribed to the ARQRV Residents Committee "Support Desk". This provides specialist assistance and advice solely to resident committees about matters relevant to their role in their village. Both product sales and subscriptions have continued to increase from last year. This year also saw the printing and posting of several hundred copies of the Residents committee manual updates.

I would like to thank the committee and members for their ongoing support. I would especially like to thank Judy for giving me the opportunity to implement new ideas and expand my skillset which has allowed us to broaden and improve the running of the office and membership. I would also like to thank Pauline for her assistance, dedication, and willingness to learn and grow in her role. Thank you, Pauline.



PAULINE BROWNLIE

Laurie Summerville / Office Manager

Our strength and effectiveness relies on a strong membership base.

We encourage residents to join us to form a strong and active voice for residents in retirement villages. Annual and Lifetime memberships are available. Please contact us if you would like to know more.





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Residents Committee Support Desk

ARQRV offers a low-cost service providing support and education to subscribing residents committees about their legislative function and operation. Subscribing committees may also request the review of draft village budgets and expenditure by a specialist advisor.

More information and subscription details are available on the ARQRV website or by contacting the office.

| Number of accommodation units | Annual Fee |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Up to 50 | \$30 |
| 51 to 100 | \$50 |
| 101 to 200 | \$70 |
| 200 to 300 | \$90 |
| Over 300 | \$110 |

Have you considered volunteering for the ARQRV Committee?

As the number of retirement village residents in Queensland is increasing rapidly, so do the number of ARQRV members. The services we offer to members is also increasing. We need your skills to further develop the services to our members and to ensure their lifestyle is enhanced and their rights and financial investment is protected. You do not need to live in Brisbane as you can attend the monthly committee meetings via teleconference.



The Association of Residents of Queensland Retirement Villages Inc







OUR VISION

To be Queensland's leading advocacy organisation for residents living in a retirement village




OUR MISSION

To provide representation, information and support to members that allows them to live a life of quiet enjoyment in the retirement village of their choice

OUR GOALS

-  To ensure legislation protects the rights of all retirement village residents
-  To advocate and support members
-  To inform members of retirement living issues
-  To increase awareness of residents' rights in a village
-  To offer information and training to residents' committees
-  To educate and empower members

OUR FOUNDATION

-  A competent committee
-  Effective and efficient practices
-  Commitment to growth and on-going development of the Association

