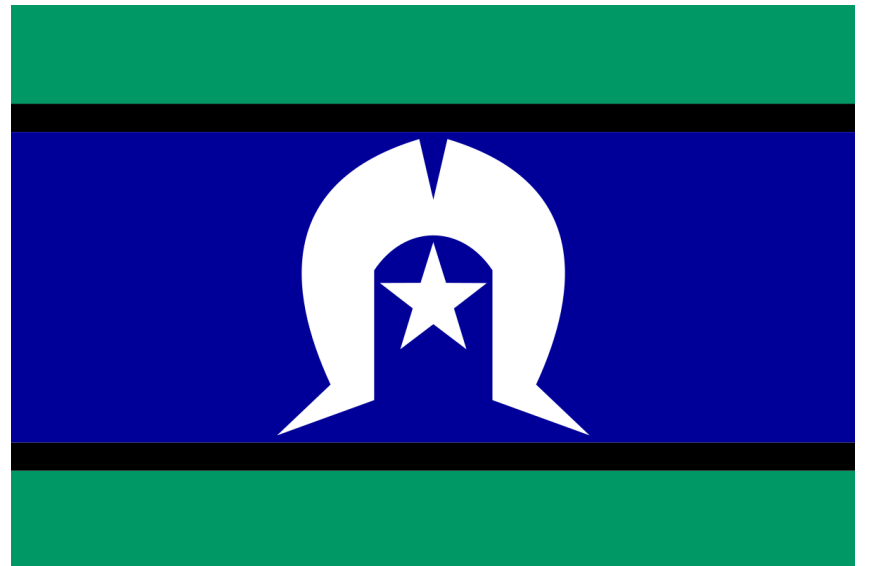




HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.

Retirement Housing Options: Get informed

Acknowledgement of Country



Today's session will help you to:

Learn about different retirement housing options, including retirement villages, residential parks, lifestyle villages, rental villages, independent living units.

Understand what to consider when looking to move into retirement housing.

Understand how to join in campaigning about retirement housing issues.



Who we are...

Housing for the Aged Action group is a community organisation campaigning for housing justice since 1983.

We believe in a society where older people have safe, secure and affordable housing.



What is Retirement Housing?



Umbrella term to cover housing primarily targeted to older people, often aged 50 years and older.



Not all people in these housing types are retired.



Wide range of housing types suiting different types of residents

What is Retirement Housing?

Diverse sector; some are for profit, some not for profit.

Covered by different kinds of legislation, mostly the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) and the Retirement Villages Act (RVA).

Some provide meals, services, amenities, facilities, such as community centres, swimming pools, gyms, bus services, activities, others solely provide housing.

Some require lump-sum payments to move in, while others only charge rent.

Options Discussed Today:

Retirement
Villages

Residential
Parks

Caravan
Parks

Rental
Villages

Independent
Living Units



Retirement Villages

What are they?

- Units or apartments for older people who still live independently
- Often (not always) have big upfront and exit costs
- Residents may buy or lease their units (even when paying high ingoing amounts)



Retirement Villages

Positives:

Community living, security, recreation activities and facilities, longer term leases.

Negatives:

Community living, costs and fees, village rules and limited residents' rights, complicated contracts.





Residential Parks/Villages and Caravan Parks

What are they?

- Dwellings called cabins, demountables or moveable units
- Residents buy their homes but rent the land the homes occupy
- Caravan parks residents may either own or rent their dwellings, which are generally cheaper than residential park homes



Residential Parks/Villages and Caravan Parks

Positives:

Community living, more affordable than retirement villages with similar feel, no stamp duty/tax.

Negatives:

Community living, costs and fees, park rules and limited residents' rights, complicated contracts.



Independent Living Units

What are they?

- Units or apartments for older people who still live independently, provided by not-for-profit organisations and charities
- Often more affordable than other options, but may still have significant ingoing costs





Independent Living Units

Positives:

Community living, security of tenure, affordable rents.

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Negatives:

Community living, ageing stock, sale of land, long waiting periods.



Rental villages

What are they?

- Units in a village where all the residents are older people
- Rental units only – no ingoing fees
- Relatively high rents – 80% of the aged pension or more
- Often no kitchen facilities, with the rent including daily meals



**What to
consider when
deciding
where to live?**



Costs and charges

What are the costs and fees?

- Ingoing
- Outgoing
- Weekly/Fortnightly/Monthly

What is the rent increase mechanism?

- Will you be able to afford to live here in 5, 10, 20 years?

Eligibility and Waitlists

- Different places may have different age criteria, formal or informal
- Some places will have a mix of holiday makers, permanent renters, owners and renters.
- Some places prioritise residents from particular communities or cultural backgrounds
- Each place will likely have their own application process, priority process and wait time.

Rights, Responsibilities and Rules

Know what legislation your contract is covered by and who to go to if you need support.

Understand the specific village rules to make sure they suit how you want to live.

- For example, gardens, pets, guests, parking, communal facilities, live-in carers, home supports

Is there a Residents Committee?

- How is it run and how do they work with management?

Planning for the future



What costs will you pay when you leave?

- For example: exit fees, refurbishment costs, ongoing rent
- Will you receive an exit payment? If so, when?
- Do you benefit from any capital gain?

Will you be able to leave if you want to?

Can you modify the property if your needs change as you age?

Contracts

- Make sure you seek legal/professional advice before signing, and that you understand the terms.
- Take time to make the decision and take note of cooling off periods.
- Keep a hard copy and digital copy on file and take note of any verbal agreements and follow up in writing to confirm.
- Remember all contracts can be quite different, even within a village or park. Make sure you know what YOU are signing.



Retirement Housing Advice Service

The service is free and confidential.

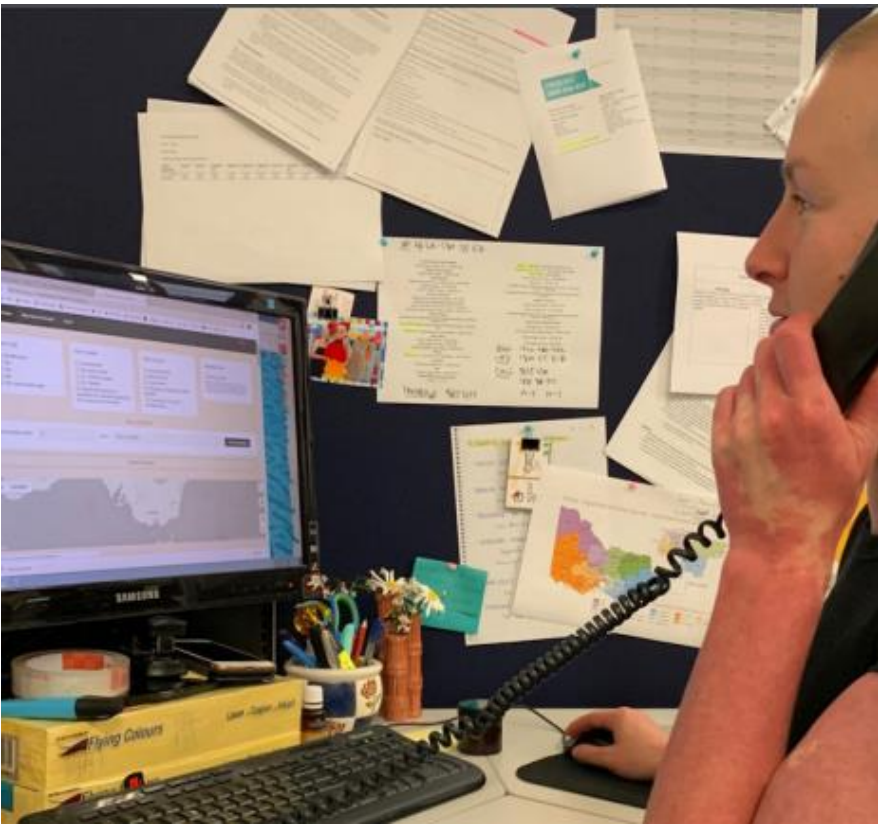
Who is the service for?

- People living in retirement housing options who have questions, concerns or difficulties.
- People who are interested in moving into retirement housing options.

Eligibility:

- On a low income or financially disadvantaged.
- Living in, or wanting to live in a retirement housing option.

Referral to a more appropriate service if necessary.



Retirement Housing Systemic Issues

- Last year saw a lot of media attention to retirement housing issues
- Bill to amend the Retirement Villages Act currently before Parliament
- Government says it will consider reforms to laws about residential parks this year



Changes to the Retirement Villages Act



Reduced complexity of contracts

We welcome the introduction of standardized contracts, which address longstanding issues with ambiguous and confusing contracts.



Introduction of a Mandatory Code of Conduct

We welcome the mandatory code of conduct as a strong signal for better industry practices. It offers hope for stronger consumer protections against mistreatment by unscrupulous operators. **Effective enforcement is crucial**, with public reporting of breaches and stronger regulatory powers needed to ensure accountability.

Changes to the Retirement Villages Act



Improved security of tenure

The bill introduces new principles and protections to prevent unfair terminations, but **doesn't go far enough** and still allows residents to be evicted for minor breaches in some circumstances. We're concerned eviction threats will still be used to harass residents and manipulate exit payments to extract windfall profits.



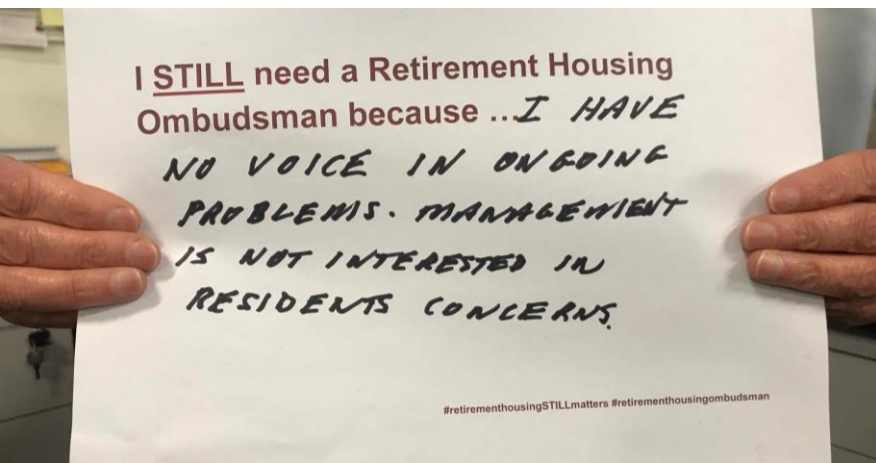
Improved dispute resolution

Residents want and deserve an ombudsman service that offers **free, binding decisions** on retirement village disputes. The dispute resolution approach in the bill improves on the current system, but its focus on good-faith negotiations does not go far enough. We look forward to working with the Govt to make the new dispute resolution process is appropriate for residents.



Stop excessive fees

We welcome stronger fee regulations, including limits on renovation costs, fairer capital gain/loss distribution, and independent valuations. **While exit fee improvements are positive, they don't go far enough.** We're concerned the reforms may still enable harmful practices like resident churning and leave people trapped in unsuitable villages.



Getting involved

- HAAG has a working group for retirement housing residents called the Retirement Accommodation Action Group, or RAAG
- Meet on the 3rd Friday of every month
- In person or online
- Discussion of shared experiences and issues.
- Support to lobby in local, state and federal areas.
- Consultations, discussion around policy, legislation.
- Information shared in the RAAG meetings assists HAAG in lobbying and writing submissions to government.

HAAG Contacts

Home at Last

1300 765 178



**Retirement Housing
Advice Service**

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HAAG

9654 7389



www.older tenants.org.au