

WARVRA Newsletter

Presidents Report

Colin Edwards

President WARVRA

Hi to all our much valued members and a particularly warm welcome to our new members from both the Metropolitan and Regional sectors.

It has been a somewhat difficult time for our depleted team with both our Vice President Verelle Ward and myself having surgery for health issues. However I think I can confidently say the remainder of the team have done an amazing job both within their own portfolios of work and backing both Verelle and me up with ours. Their reports are contained within this edition.

However I have been available and have dealt with a variety of Advocacy calls many of which relate to either sections of members' village contracts or legislative related issues.

I still continue to take calls from family members on the unfortunate passing or relocating to a care organisation of a relative requesting information on what to expect and what to do when vacating a villa.

Can I suggest that members discuss with their family members, the contents of their village's contract; especially that which relates to vacating their villa, and termination of their contracts (not easy sometimes I know).

The issue of Council Rates and duplication of some of the services we pay for as maintenance from our recurrent charges has been raised.

This issue will be discussed at the next General meeting.

I shall be travelling to Melbourne on the 24th of this month for a one day meet; representing our Association, with the National Owners and interstate Residents Associations on the 25th July. Most costs will be met by the RLC.

The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss common issues of both bodies with the aim of improving both relationships and hopefully some ideas addressing our needs and concerns that are common Nationally. I will report on the outcomes of this meeting at our next general meeting on August 12th at Piney Lakes.

Finally, we have been approached by a University Study group doing some valuable research on retirement life transition. The research will be in the form of some online questions and answers; and is entirely voluntary. Ultimately it should provide valuable assistance to retirees in general in the future.

The only criteria is that you have become a retiree fairly recently, and you have online access.

If interested and prepared to help please contact:

Marla Bishop via email: marla.bishop@student.curtin.edu.au

My regards to you all and I hope to see you at our GENERAL MEETING on AUGUST 12th at PINEY LAKES Environmental Training Centre, Leach Hwy BOORAGOON.



WARVRA

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

A General Meeting of the Association will be held at
Piney Lakes Environmental Education Centre
Leach Highway, Winthrop

(The entry to the centre is on the south side of Leach Highway, between Murdoch Drive and Winthrop Drive)

FRIDAY 12th AUGUST 2016
at 10am

BUSINESS

President's Report
Treasurer's Report
Legislation and Advocacy Report
Membership and Education Report
General Business

Forum "Members' Issues"

This Forum will give members the opportunity to discuss issues in an open situation with any member of the WARVRA committee.

Welcome to WARVRA

We are pleased to welcome the following villages to WARVRA membership:

Amana Moline Village, Karrinyup
Platinum Communities, Balcatta
Meath Care, Como
RAAFA Cambrai, Merriwa
Rangeview, High Wycombe

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Western Australian Retirement Villages Residents Association Inc

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WARVRA Committee Directory 2016-17

Name	Role(s)	Phone	Mob	Email	Correspondence
Colin Edwards	President & Advocacy	08 9535 6005	0427 247 514	talworth40@gmail.com	11/10 Hungerford Avenue, Halls Head 6210
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Val Brown	Secretary	08 9557 1845	0419 910 724	gg.vb@bigpond.com	145/38 Norwood Avenue, Baldivis 6171
Bob Hamilton	Treasurer	08 9535 2240	0427 199 711	hamish53@bigpond.com	53/22 Carnegie Place, Greenfields 6210
Des Cousins	Legislation/Advocacy (C)	08 9407 7849	0417 314 735	dcousins@iimetro.com.au	
Julia Lynch	Membership & Education	08 9557 5139	-	julialynch@westnet.com.au	
Ian Nordeck	Membership & Education(C)	08 9534 7650	-	ianandreae@internode.on.net	
Arthur Mccarthy	Legislation/Advocacy	08 9447 4077	-	(tba)	

Regional Committees' Directory

NAME	POSITION	PHONE	MOBILE	EMAIL	REGION
Monika Cull	Convenor	08 9843 3786	-	monikacull@gmail.com	GREAT SOUTHERN
Ron Sparks	Co-Convenor	08 9754 2614	0427 002 614	norskrap@bigpond.com	SOUTH WEST
Dianne Wilson	Co-Convenor	08 9724 4889	-	didiroy@hotmail.com	SOUTH WEST
Ian Nordeck	Convenor	08 9534 7650		ianandreae@internode.on.net	PEEL
Patricia Nelson	Convenor	-	0417 948 092	patnels2@gmail.com	MID WEST

Council Rates

Over several years, WARVRA has sought to get fairer rates from local councils for residents in villages. Many of the services funded by council rates are not supplied to villages and the village itself (that means the residents) pays for them – such as street lighting, road repairs and verge maintenance.

We first approached the Valuer General seeking a reduction in the values placed on village residential properties so that the rate charged would be lower. After many meetings and phone discussions, the Valuer General advised that he did not consider he had the power to do this under his controlling legislation. He recommended that we approach the local councils.

Under the Local Government Act, Councils have the power to charge differential rates (usually rural or residential property or similar distinctive uses). An approach was made to the City of Mandurah as several of the interested villages were in that area. The Council rejected any change to lower village rates.

It appears the only real option left is to get the Local Government Act amended to provide specifically for a discount for the rates levied on retirement village residential properties (as against those properties held for communal use). There is an election early next year, so why not approach your members of state parliament and seek their support?

Des Cousins

ADVOCATES WANTED!!

A major piece of WARVRA's work is providing advocacy services. These can range from answering questions like "Can they charge us for fixing the sewer?" to "How can I stop my neighbour's son making so much noise on his motor bike?" More demanding, advocacy may involve working with residents in preparing and conducting an application to the State Administrative Tribunal or supporting a resident in a request to the village management for special parking arrangements for a disabled resident.

Most of this work at present is done by our President, Colin Edwards and myself. Colin has many demands on his time (as well as looking after his health) and I am standing down from this task at the end of the year after 5 years. We need to recruit and train some more helpers before the end of this year!

I have agreed to the Committee's request to conduct a series of training and mentoring meetings with new advocates over the remainder of this year.

I propose to deal with six of the major areas of concern that have come to me:

- general rights of residents
- residents committees
- residents meetings/residents associations/constitutions/proxy voting
- budgets and accounts
- exiting the village and refurbishment of properties
- disputes and applications to the Tribunal

We will use role plays and case studies to try out what we are learning and provide on-going mentoring to new advocates.

We urgently need volunteers if WARVRA is to continue its good work. Contact me on 9407 7849 or dcousins@iimetro.com.au

*Des Cousins
Legislation and Advocacy*

WARVRA Newsletter

Next Issue 28 October 2016

*All contributions should be received by
Wednesday 19th October*

Contact Secretary Val Brown for more information

(See Directory at top of this page)

Membership Matters

Ian Nordeck,
Convenor, Membership and Education.

When the membership drive commenced in September 2014, we had 74 villages with a total membership of 9,000 residents.

At the end of June 2016, we have 107 member villages with 13,048 members; 14 new villages joined our organisation in the first half of this year.

Given that the total number of villages in Western Australia is 220 with 23,000 residents, we can now claim to have in excess of 50% of the retirement village community as members, an achievement of which we should all be proud. Much of our achievement has been created by residents of villages spreading the word of the benefits of WARVRA membership.

But, there is still much work to be done!

Regional Meetings:

All regions were visited during the last quarter and were addressed by Des Cousins with an update on Legislation and Advocacy Matters.

The Convenors in the regions do an excellent job in co-ordinating and developing WARVRA activity, and their assistance is greatly appreciated by me and the residents in the regions.

There is still much recruiting to be done in the regions and development plans are being drawn up to facilitate this work.

Recruiting Development:

Following the advertisement in the last edition of our Newsletter, 8 members have volunteered to consider joining the Membership Development team to increase our recruiting and membership activities. The members that indicated expressions of interest are:-

Laurie Varendorff – St Louis Estate, Claremont
Michael Harvey – Balladong Village, York
Dean Phillips – Donovan Village, Forrestfield
Maureen McCormack – Mertome Village, Bayswater
Robert May – St David's Village, Mt Lawley
Gordon Brown – Affinity Village, Baldivis
Marion Millin – St Ives, North Shore
Arthur McCarthy – Meath Mews, Trigg

A meeting is to be held to introduce the volunteers to the WARVRA Committee and to plan their activities and training.

It is extremely encouraging to receive such support from a special group of people who are volunteering their time and enthusiasm to WARVRA.

We are always available and happy to speak with residents who may wish to be involved with the development of WARVRA membership. Please contact me by phone – 9534 7650 – or email ianandrae@internode.on.net.

Information Sharing

Julia Lynch
Membership/Education

WARVRA had planned to hold another Prospective Village Residents' Forum during 2016 however, the cost of advertising and low attendances in 2015 was concerning the Committee who have decided not to run this event. We have four information booths booked for 2016 which will allow us to meet current and prospective village residents. The events WARVRA will be attending during 2016 are as follows:

(1) Live Lighter Seniors activity/information day.

Thursday 25th August 10am

16 Furnissdale Rd, Furnissdale (Masonic Hall) free entry, morning tea and lunch.

(2) Live Lighter Seniors Information Day

Thursday 9th September 10am.

20 White Street, Bunbury. (Southwest Italian Club) morning tea supplied.

(3) Seniors Expo **weekend of October 29th and 30th**

Claremont Show grounds.

(4) Have a Go Day

Wednesday 9th November commencing at 9am

at Burswood.

If you can manage to come along to any of these events we would appreciate your support and enjoy meeting you.

To assist us in promoting WARVRA we have recently had three informative and colourful A2 size posters printed. It is thought this static display may assist visitors to our booths with understanding who we represent and what we are aiming to achieve.

Wanted



If any member knows of a three sided folding display board that WARVRA could use/have/purchase to display the posters, we would be interested in hearing from you.

Phone 0401 284 555 (Julia).

It would need to be light enough to be easily carried.

Here's some good advice

WHAT IS THE “RETIREMENT VILLAGE LEGISLATION”?

Before 1992, there was no legislation controlling the operation of “retirement villages”. In that year, the government introduced the Retirement Villages Act which was designed to protect the “consumers”, that is, the residents. Village operators complain that there is too much legislation, too many rules and it is restrictive in their attempts to establish new villages. But it must be remembered that the legislation was first introduced, and continues to be expanded, because some operators have taken advantage of vulnerable seniors. Better self-regulation by the retirement village operators would result in less government sponsored legislation to protect the residents.

At this time, there are three pieces of legislation directly relating to retirement villages:

1. Retirement Villages ACT (commonly called “the Act”) which is described as “an Act to regulate retirement villages and the rights of residents in such villages”. The Act contains definitions and sets up a government administration structure for retirement villages – under the Commissioner for Consumer Protection. The Act then sets out “rights and obligations of residents, owners and administering bodies” – including the need for a written residence contract, placing a memorial on the land restricting its use to a retirement village until no part of the land is any longer being used as a retirement village, how a residence contract is terminated and binds any further owner of the land. The Act also deals with “resolution of disputes” and includes the powers of the State Administrative Tribunal in regard to retirement villages. Most of the powers contained in the Act are made operative through the Regulations.

2. Retirement Villages REGULATIONS (commonly called “the Regulations”) which spell out how some of the provisions of the Act are to be carried out. The Regulations require the owner to provide a prospective resident with an information statement (Form 1 or Form 1A) and a notice of rights under sections 13 and 14 of the Act (Form 2) at least 10 working days before you enter into a residence contract. The Regulations also deal with the disposal of abandoned goods left by a departing resident. 2014 amendments to the Regulations limit the time a resident who has permanently vacated their premises has to continue paying recurrent charges and list some matters in respect of which the administering body may not require payment. New Regulations added in 2015 set out matters which must or must not be included in residential and service contracts. The 2016 Amendments updated Form 1 and introduced a new Form 1A for short term tenure arrangements.

3. Fair Trading (Retirement Villages CODE) Regulations (commonly called “the Code”). The Act is further supplemented by a code of fair practice made under the Fair Trading Act. The Code deals with operational matters in a retirement village and outlines responsibilities of owners and administering bodies and the rights of residents. Its contents include:

- sales promotion of a village and the information that must be disclosed;
- the rights and obligations of the administering body and residents in relation to the management and operation of a retirement village including consultation on the village operating budget, provision of operating income and expenditure statements at least quarterly, the establishment of a residents committee and the holding of residents meetings;
- dispute resolution processes;
- termination of a residence contract; and
- a list of questions that a prospective resident should carefully read and consider before deciding to enter any retirement village.

Of particular importance to residents, the 2015 Code provides a much improved set of requirements for financial reporting to residents which is mandatory for the financial year beginning 1 July 2016.

Full copies of the legislation can be downloaded from the WARVRA website in an easy to use A4 format. The link is <http://warvra.org.au/current-residents/legislation>.

Always remember that the retirement villages legislation is part of the government’s responsibility for “consumer protection”! It is there for your benefit, to protect you against bad or poor operators. Check it whenever you feel your rights are not being respected.

Des Cousins, Legislation and Advocacy