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Western Australian Retirement Villages Residents Association Inc

INFORMATION PAPER No. 3

SETTING UP A RESIDENTS COMMITTEE

It is your right to set up a residents committee.

Setting up a Residents Committee is a statutory right of every village! The Retirement Villages Code in section 5.10 provides:

- The residents of a retirement village may establish a residents committee by an election.
- Only one residents committee (regardless of its name) may be established in a village.
- Only a resident of the village may be a member.
- A member of a residents committee holds office for one year but may be re-elected.
- A member of a residents committee may be removed at any time by a special resolution carried by the residents of the village.
- A residents committee may decide its own procedures.
- A residents committee may form sub-committees and decide a sub-committee's procedures.

What is the role of a residents committee?

The role or function of a residents committee is to consult with management on behalf of the residents about the day-to-day running of a retirement village and to discuss with them any issues raised by residents. It is not a decision making body, in its statutory role it is merely an advisory or consultative body.

Matters for consultation

But the matters on which it can advise or consult with management are very diverse and of great importance to the residents. It is an opportunity to ensure that management hears the views of residents on such matters as village budgets, maintenance fees or levies, village rules, the need for maintenance in the village and so on. An active, well-functioning residents committee adds value to a retirement village because it can offer significant assistance to the overall operation of the village, provide protection for the residents (there is strength in numbers) and can contribute to a stable village environment. Astute managers and operators recognise these values and try to work with the residents committee.

Other matters residents committees may consider

Apart from its statutory consultation task, a residents committee might provide the leadership in village social and cultural activities, the preparation and publishing of a village newsletter, the organisation of voluntary workers and projects to improve the Village amenity, gardening activities, the acquisition of additional Village amenities (eg, golf cart, patio barbecue), the operation of Clubhouse facilities such as the Bar and Library and a website for residents.

Establishing a residents committee

Your Village Scheme might provide for a residents committee and if it does you should follow its procedures. But, if nothing is already set out for you to follow, here is a simple way to get a residents committee up and running.

- Step 1:** Call a meeting of all residents and decide whether the residents wish to form a residents committee. If they do, elect a working group or steering committee to develop the aims, functions and procedures for your proposed residents committee and to report back to all residents by an agreed date (say, two months maximum).
- Step 2:** The steering committee should prepare a set of rules for the residents committee, including a statement of its aims and purposes, how many members and how elected, office bearers and how elected, when the committee will meet, what is the quorum and how its meetings will be conducted, how any money is handled etc.
- Step 3:** Circulate the report and proposed rules prepared by the steering committee to all residents and call a meeting at which the proposals can be discussed – give at least two weeks' notice. If necessary, the proposed rules can be amended at this meeting.
- Step 4:** Have management call a special residents general meeting for the purpose of considering a “special resolution” to adopt the rules and to form a residents committee. A “special resolution” can only be considered at a meeting called by management, at which at least 30% of the residents are present and any resolution must be approved by at least 75% of those present personally or by proxy.
- Step 5:** If the formation of the residents committee and the rules are approved, then arrange an election for the first members of the committee (conducted in accordance with the rules approved). Then let the Committee get on with its work.

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