

ACT Retirement Village Residents Association Inc.

To: provide independent information, advice, advocacy and representation

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023

It is with great pleasure that I present my report to you today telling of the key events and activities of the Association over the last year, most particularly for the first half of 2023 when I became President.

You may recall in my members' report in August we highlighted our three major initiatives:

- Progress towards the creation of a Retirement Village Ombudsman.
- A well-publicised and attended first Public Forum.
- A professional website showcasing the Association for the first time.

We could not have done this without the assistance of a large number of people. The Committee is particularly grateful for the help, guidance, advice, and offer of free facilities, that have enabled the Association to get to where it is today. I would like to gratefully thank them all, particularly those who are here at the AGM.

I would also like to thank the Southern Cross Club Woden which has generously hosted this meeting as they did previously for the first Retirement Village Forum in June this year. Special mention goes to the National Zoo and Aquarium, the ACT Registered Club movement and Living Chiropractic who have donated prizes for our Draw later today.

Other organisations I need to acknowledge include the ACT Government and its agencies, especially the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) and the Human Rights Commission (HRC). Vintages Reds (VR), CARE Consumer Law, the Property Council of Australia and the Retirement Living Council, and especially the Residents Committees and Management of the ACT Retirement Villages, have all aided and supported us, which we greatly appreciate. We are also grateful for the support and advice of the Council on the Ageing (COTA, ACT) in guiding our efforts to become more firmly established and helping us to seek government funding.

Your current committee has worked hard to highlight a number of deficiencies in the governance of the ACT Retirement Village industry, and to effect change. For instance, there are no accurate statistics on the number of ACT Retirement Villages, total number of independent living units in those villages, or the number of residents living in those units. Unlike other jurisdictions, the ACT Government does not require village operators in the ACT to register their Retirement Villages. We have now prepared our own list compiled from many sources. We hope this will change soon.

Significantly, the Government has recognised the need for a review of a number of aspects of the governance and operation of retirement villages. Although it did not agree to set up an ACT RV Ombudsman (as we had strongly advocated), it has established a Working Group involving a wide range of relevant stakeholders to review the ACT Retirement Village legislation. We are a member of this Working Group, and the only representatives who can bring lived Retirement Village experience to the table.

As an indication of the Government's acknowledgement of our efforts, it is providing seed funds to enable us to create a Secretariat to better serve the ever-growing number of retirees in, and those planning to enter, ACT retirement villages. Our aim is to become a reliable resource on a wide range of matters related to retirement village living. Currently, there is no such single entity.

See our list of 'Current Activities' for the projects we are currently undertaking and those proposed for the future.

SUCCESSFUL AS THE ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE OUR PROGRESS WILL CONTINUE WITH VIGOUR UNLESS WE HAVE MORE MEMBERS. IN PARTICULAR, WE NEED MORE ENTHUSIASTIC, COMMITTED AND COMPETENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO REPLACE THOSE RETIRING.

UNLESS THIS HAPPENS, THE ASSOCIATION COULD FLOUNDER AS IT HAS BEFORE.

PLEASE ASSIST YOUR ASSOCIATION TO BECOME THE ACKNOWLEDGED AND RECOGNISED CHAMPION IT HAS TO BE, FOR RETIREMENT VILLAGE RESIDENTS TO RECEIVE THEIR DUE.

John Beagle
President

November 2023