

Report of Zoom meeting with ARQRV residents committee group 28/02/2024

This meeting was the latest in a series organised by the Association of Queensland Retirement Villages (ARQRV) for representatives of residents' committees.

It was attended by Judy Mayfield the President and staff of ARQRV, 22 representatives of residents' committees in other villages. and Russell Morgan and two other officers from the Queensland state government department responsible for retirement villages. This has recently been reorganised / renamed as a consequence of a ministerial re-shuffle as the '*Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works and Regulatory Services*'.

There was also an interesting presentation from James Wiltshire the Executive Director from the DCM Institute

Key points

- Department: Changes to Retirement Villages Regulations. Russell Morgan reported that there were still ongoing discussions about the proposed changes concerning financial reporting and transparency. A further round of consultations would probably be needed before the next draft could be submitted to the Minister for approval. It seems unlikely that the final version will be published before the end of the current financial year.

Judy Mayfield said that once the new regulations were implemented, ARQRV would update its financial issues document and would hold an education / training session for interested members.

Other comments from departmental staff were mainly about the need for residents to be aware of the processes for dispute resolution, stressing that these needed to be discussed first with village operators. The Department could not be involved in mediation and could only point out the correct processes for resolving issues by referral to QCAT – the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Currently disputes seem often to be related to disagreements about resale prices of units and the costs of refurbishment.

- Presentation from DCM Institute by James Wiltshire This [organisation](#) provides professional development services for the staff of retirement villages across Australia. Their courses are mostly focused on the learning needs of village managers in property, asset, financial, and complaints management, working with residents' committees, and regulation compliance. Their courses are delivered online and have been used by more 600 managers enrolled across the country. They also seem to be involved in helping operators to assess and appoint the most suitable applicants for positions as managers.

His key points were that:

- The widening scope of practice requirements, and of required experience and expertise, especially in the areas of regulatory compliance monitoring, is making it more difficult to find suitably qualified candidates, and those that do apply often have expectations of a salary higher than the national average of \$96,000.

- There is an increasing rate of turnover in these positions, mostly related to these higher demands, and in particular to increasing ratios of residents to managers – as high as 500 to 1 and sometimes with responsibilities across more than one village.
- Subsequent discussion among village representatives confirmed this high turnover and mentioned as factors:
 - Extra stress on managers in longer established villages from the extra demands arising from the ageing and therefore more fragile resident populations, and from the greater expectations about facility maintenance and resources from more recent and more affluent new entrants.
 - The frequent expectation of operators for managers to be on call 24 hrs a day 7 days a week, seemingly without full exploration of cross-cover possibilities among villages.
- It was also of interest that one village operator had recently invited a representative from the residents' committee to sit on the selection committee for a village manager appointment.

Mike Ward

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