

Media Release

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Retirement Villages Act implementation welcomed at last

Retirement Commissioner Diana Crossan welcomed the Retirement Villages Act 2003 coming fully into force today.

This is a significant milestone and a great day for retirement villages - not only for New Zealanders living in retirement villages but also for those moving into a village," Ms Crossan said.

"Residents now have a Code of Residents' Rights under the Act, which gives them the right to get what they were promised and are entitled to."

The Code provides other important rights to residents such as having the right to be informed and consulted over changes that affect them, and to have complaints and disputes resolved in a prompt and efficient way.

Every village must now appoint a statutory supervisor. Under the Act, statutory supervisors have a broad role and powers to intervene on behalf of residents.

The legal and financial matters associated with village living are complex. The Act now requires village operators to give people, who are considering moving into a village, specific documents that set out exactly what's involved with their rights and the costs and conditions of living in a village. People are also required to get independent legal advice before signing up to a village, and have 15 working days in which to cancel the agreement after signing.

The Retirement Commissioner is responsible for monitoring the effects of the new legislation, promoting education and publishing information on retirement village issues and approving adjudicators for appointment to a disputes panel.

The Department of Building and Housing is responsible for the implementation of the Act.

Summary of Code of Residents' Rights

Retirement village residents now have a Code of Residents' Rights, which summarises their basic rights under the Act:

- to get the services and other benefits promised in their occupation right agreement
- to information affecting the terms and conditions of their residency

- to be consulted by the operator about proposed changes that affect their occupancy or ability to pay for the services and benefits provided
- to complain to the operator and to receive a response within a reasonable time
- to a speedy and efficient process for resolving disputes between them and the operator or between residents
- to involve a support person or a person to represent them in their dealings with the village operator or other residents (at their own cost)
- to be treated with courtesy and have their rights respected by the operator, the people who work at the village and the people who provide services there
- not to be exploited by the operator and these people.

The full Code of Residents' Rights can be found on the Retirement Commission's website at this link:

www.retirement.org.nz/guide_to_retirement_villages_act_2003_page10.html

Further information on Retirement Villages is available on:

- The implementation of the Act, visit the Department of Building and Housing: www.dbh.govt.nz/retirement-villages.html or call free 0800 836 262
- Registration requirements and statutory supervisors, visit the Companies Office: www.retirementvillages.govt.nz or call free 0800 268 269
- Residents' and intending residents' rights and operators' obligations to them, visit the Retirement Commission's website: www.retirement.org.nz/retirement-villages-home.html or call free 0800 438 767 for printed information
- Choosing a retirement village, visit the Retirement Commission's Sorted website: www.sorted.org.nz/60plus-retirement-villages.html or call free 0800 438 767 for printed information.

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