

Inquiry into the retirement housing sector LSIC@parliament.vic.gov.au

Denis & Shirley Mathews [REDACTED].

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

We hereby submit our 'story' outlining one important issue that we have encountered since moving into a brand new Villa at [REDACTED] Park in August 2015. On arrival we were told of one maintenance issue (minor scratches on 2 floor tiles in dining room) that would be dealt with. 10 months later still not attended to. We also queried the noise coming from the ducted heating and were told, "*oh yes, this is the villa with the noisy heating*" but offered no explanation.

Devine Homes require new residents to submit a maintenance request within 90 days (3 months) of occupation – we submitted eleven pages worth. Seven (7) months later, we are still 'fighting' to have our maintenance issues satisfactorily dealt with.

Some 'minor' issues were dealt with (begrudgingly) e.g. rusting shower fixtures; doors not closing properly; cracked cornices, etc. However, we were visited by the site manager one afternoon and spend over an hour being argued with and bullied as he insisted that we sign off on the entire maintenance request. We refused to sign as the jobs had not been done – finally, he left leaving us feeling bullied, abused, angry and upset by his refusal to even negotiate any of these outstanding requests. His mantra: "*that's acceptable building standard*" or "*not going to happen*".

After that visit, I wrote to Country Club Villages describing his behaviour and lack of professionalism and since then, some of our maintenance issues have been addressed. However, we have had, and seems, have to continue to fight and argue for every job to be done.

Some of the issues we are still disputing are: Air conditioning illegally installed and covered up; window frame badly damaged by something being smashed into it; garage floor cracked and pitted (cement cancer?) and totally unacceptable paint work throughout the entire Villa (one spayed on undercoat only).

In all the time we have been at [REDACTED] Park, there has hardly been a day without some issue to be dealt with – speaking to other residents, it would appear that this is the way Devine Homes treat everyone – possibly with the intention of wearing people down to the point where they give up asking for what is rightfully theirs.

With an ineffectual Residents' Committee who seem more in tune with Country Club Villages, and a manager who has been hood-winked by that Residents' Committee we feel we have no voice other than to stand firm and continue to fight for our rights.

Yours faithfully, Denis & Shirley Mathews [REDACTED].

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Shirley & Denis Mathews [REDACTED]

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Please find our 'story' outlining village management concerns.

Recently, three members of the Residents' Committee offered their resignation which came as a surprise to several of the committee. However, it appeared that Country Club Village (CCV) management and the Village Managers were aware that this was to happen because immediately following the resignations, the Operations Manager from CCV announced that this meant that the Residents' Committee was no longer able to continue and that [REDACTED] Park would operate without such committee until the AGM to be held in October. No discussion followed- the meeting was finished.

One active resident felt that this situation was not in the interests of all residents so called an information gathering to gauge support to ask the managers if they would allow a full Residents' meeting to be held within the next week if possible. The gathering happened this morning (Tuesday 14/6/16) and the feeling was unanimous. At that, the instigator and another person respectfully approached the Managers in order to get things moving re a full Residents' meeting.

The managers did not agree that this should happen. The men came back into the meeting room – by this stage, the office was closed and the managers had left the building. The Operations Manager of CCV appeared in the Village and went to the managers' residence. It appears that the managers have resigned although we have not received any official notification as yet.

Who knows what will happen from here on in leaving all of us feeling vulnerable and confused. With no active Residents' committee and no managers available to answer any questions or give any directions, where does this leave all the residents?

New residents, in particular, feel that they have been "sold a pup" by coming here to live. They also feel let down as while this is happening, no business can be attended to, be it maintenance issues or other information. This is a deplorable situation which smacks of 'control' rather than management.

At this present time, [REDACTED] Park has no management to speak of. This is simply unacceptable as we pay managers to look out for our best interests. We expect to be treated with dignity, respect, appropriate care and quality of life as retirees and feel that a Retirement Housing Ombudsman needs to be appointed to offer support for all.

Yours faithfully,

Shirley & Denis Mathews [REDACTED].

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From: Denis & Shirley Mathews [REDACTED]

14th June 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Please find the following submission re building & contents insurance in retirement villages.

On moving into [REDACTED] Park Country Club Village last August we were advised that we only needed to take out 'contents' insurance because Country Club Villages (CCV) took responsibility to insure the buildings.

We have since found out that CCV's building insurance policies do not cover such items as stoves, dishwashers, curtains, carpets, air conditioners and heating appliances, etc.

Our 'contents' insurance does not cover any of the above items as they are deemed fixtures and we are unable to obtain 'building' insurance as our buildings are already 'insured'...

Surely this is an unfair situation, and especially as we only found out these things when asking for various items to be repaired or replaced due to faults arising.

This is another example of how residents of retirement villages can be taken advantage of and therefore, the need for another 'voice' through an ombudsman is imperative for the well-being of all.

Yours faithfully,

Denis & Shirley Mathews

[REDACTED]