

Aileen & John McKechnie



Dear Committee Members,

We live in a “over 55’s Lifestyle Village” which comes under the 4A (movable dwellings) section of caravan parks. This group seems to have completely fallen through the cracks regarding housing, even at the G20 conference in Geelong we did not rate a mention regarding an aging group with supposed affordable housing.

One of the major inequalities is the owners of the land do not recognize us as investors in the village, for without us buying in they would not have a business.

We do have to purchase our homes, with either a share equity, deferred management or exit fee.

Our homes are modular constructions, put together on site and extended with decking carport etc. Extremely difficult and expensive to dismantle and move especially with the narrowness of roads and accessibility for appropriate transport/cranes etc. **They are not cabins**

We are an aging population – we do not stay 55 after we come in the gate.

Many people have written we are sure regarding:–

### **Recommendations**

**Security of Tenure** –: If village is sold it has to be as an ongoing concern as is.

**Design faults** - soil test to be done and appropriate footings installed, to prevent severe cracking in dwellings

Wide hallways, minimum stairs, which can be ramped, ease of access for services (ambulance).

**Management training** - An appropriate standard of training which encompasses dealing with an ageing population, knowing how to contact services for their residents etc. as many do not have outside support.

**Resale of properties** – Hampshire – do have a shared equity buying scheme. There is no buy back scheme if a person is placed in fulltime care or deceased. Hampshire will sell on at the full or sometimes more than the original price with a 3% commission. While we do not have any problem with this commission the solution would be for them to buy back the home at even what the client would have got from the sale and they could then resell at their own price.

Under the current legislation there is no guarantee that the homes will be sold or rented on to people in the advertised age bracket.

The village structure is questionable regarding affordability

The site has a non-refundable fee of \$5000 if a house is not place on it within 12 months.

The homes can only be purchased through the owners and management. Under freedom of information it is known the parent - company DZZ receives a minimum of \$20,000 per sale.

You **cannot** buy from another manufacturer and just rent the site. As we live by the bay if you have anything like a glimpse of water the price for the “house” can be anything up to \$150,000 more, and you are expected to maintain the insurance at that level.

We have lived in the village for 5 years. Each year we have been here the site rental has increased, now up to \$153 per week. If you are an aged pensioner on your own, this even with the small amount of rent assistance, is a struggle.

Communication between owners and administration is totally lacking. The community of residents have tried to have committees over the years but each has failed because of the lack of compromise and communication, treating the residents as non-entities. The last committee folded in May 2014, I was on the Liaison, Residents and Social committees and my husband was the Treasurer. We have had no community communication since that time. As we are dealing with – (A) a private company and (B) an absent owner who lives overseas, and his partner lives interstate, there is no consultation whatsoever.

**Communication:** Public meetings with owners (when a private company) or their representatives (when a listed public company) are at least 2 twice a year.

**Resident’s common amenities:**

As there is no legislation covering the over 55’s village; the common areas within the village have no regulation re - design, practicality, tripping hazards and appropriate furniture.

**Accountability: Verbal and written forward planning, False advertising:**

In the past when the village has held open days; the plans shown to prospective buyers indicated the pool would be enclosed and heated. In 9 years this has not happened. The front area beside the water would be for all to enjoy as a park area. Beside the boat ramp there was also an emergency evacuation area. This now has houses on it and the emergency area has disappeared. With false advertising at the front gate sign - they are still advertising an active social committee, (disbanded in 2014), a jetty which they do not own and boat moorings, both which belong to the boat club. The pool is unusable for the majority of people as the height of the steps are excessive. This situation could be covered with appropriate ramping; which the past resident’s committee did investigate and put forward, but at every suggestion they were blocked. The pool is not heated, either by solar or blanket. One resident did donate a cover, as he was a retired pool-shop owner. However it was never used, as the owners and management deemed it to be unsightly.

The owners have built an extension to the community area, however it has tripping hazards, slopes, no opening windows, no flywire doors and inappropriate furniture for an aging population (as with the pool, residents suggestions were blocked).

We would urge you to support separate legislation for over 55 Villages and an Retirement Housing Ombudsman.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter

Yours faithfully

Aileen McKechnie

John McKechnie