

**Response to RRVV's request for submission from residents of retirement villages  
to Victorian Government**

- **Maintenance**

From our experience and that of other residents, it appears that the inspection process when determining a unit has been refurbished to a standard that satisfies the expectation and approval of the new owner, is not being conducted effectively. Most common complaints are with appliances that are not working properly, together with a lack of user manuals to help with their operation.

Although the interior of our unit had been repainted the exterior was in very poor condition, particularly with window frames where the paintwork had peeled back to the raw timber. When we queried when this would be attended to we were informed that painting of the external village units is done every seven years. Given the state of our external areas it would seem it is a long time since painting had been carried out.

Our cooling/heating system wasn't working properly and although it was checked by the manufacturer's employee and deemed to be in working order, another call-out was required where it was found the motor was faulty and subsequently needed replacing.

It isn't practical or possible for a potential buyer to check out issues such as these. It isn't until such time as the owner moves in that many of these problems become apparent, causing inconvenience and in many cases, unnecessary expense and stress.

Given the age of our village, a lot of appliances, for example, cooling/heating and gas hot water systems are nearing their use-by-date, and present an unexpected expense for new owners to have repaired.

- **Gardens:**

Rear courtyards are deemed to be part of a resident's property and the owner is permitted, within certain constraints, to do with it as they wish. The front of their property is deemed to be common property and unless the owner wishes to take responsibility for its upkeep, it is the village's responsibility to maintain this area.

Our village's policy is that when a resident vacates their unit, the front garden has to be returned to its original condition/appearance, meaning that any extra plantings added to this area may be removed at the village owner's discretion. This policy causes a lot of discontent among residents: it is absurd in the extreme that a resident may beautify their front garden, at their expense and adding to the appeal and saleability of the unit, but as a result of such a draconian policy the garden is destroyed .

An example – a resident moved into a unit where the front ‘garden’ consisted of a patchy piece of grass, plus a motley collection of straggly plants. They have since created an attractive and lush garden, in a very small area, bringing many compliments from other village residents. Under the present policy this lovely patch of garden would be uprooted and restored to its original appearance. Given how ugly it was before it was transformed, this is bureaucracy at its most absurd.

- **Refurbishment**

From our observations, there appears to be a slash and burn attitude to what fittings remain in a unit when it has been vacated, particularly when window coverings are removed as part of the refurbishment. Depending on how long the unit has been lived in by the vacating resident, it is understandable that floor coverings and kitchen appliances for example, are replaced. Given that the new resident will probably face a rather long wait to have new window coverings installed, we believe that it makes sense to leave these in place and that the incoming resident decides whether to keep these or ask for their removal.

Another example of waste is when a new resident installs improvements to their unit. We replaced a cheap security door (which didn’t have a lock) with a high grade, strong security door, fitted with a lock. The cost to us was \$1000.00. When seeking permission to have the door installed, we were informed that when we vacate this door would be removed. We have heard similar stories from other residents, in one case when a resident requested permission to install window locks, only to be told the same thing.

When the unit becomes vacant, unnecessary costs are incurred as a result of these policies adopted by the owners. In this age of recycling it is irresponsible in the extreme to throw away such improvements, thereby reducing the return to the resident. The improvements to the unit provide an option for potential buyers to purchase such items at a reasonable cost.



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