

Geoffrey C. Hansen  


May 31, 2016

The Secretary  
Legal and Social Issues Committee  
Parliament House, Spring Street  
East Melbourne, Vic. 3002

Dear Sir,

**Submission to the Parliament Inquiry into Retirement Housing Sector  
Requested by Nina Springle MP, South-Eastern Metro Region**

My status is: Aged 79 years, retired builder of church missions within Australia and overseas.  
Married for 52 years, Widowed for 4½ years  
Resident in an independent living unit at Village Baxter since February 2015.

When approaching residency at Village Baxter, my solicitor and I were impressed with the documentation provided by the Village, which accurately set out all of their services and costs, as well as expectations that residents would abide by. There were no hidden details in small print, and nothing that created uncertainty. The sales staff fully explained any queries, and went beyond expectations to ensure that everything was clearly understood.

Since taking up residency in February 2015 I have neither found or experienced anything that would cause any doubt or uncertainty. The sale price of \$235,000 for my fully renovated two-bedroom unit, was adhered to, and I was able to select the colours of new carpet, vinyl and curtains, and order an additional light fitting, within the quoted unit price. Any additional personal requests or alterations prior to occupancy, e.g. an additional cupboard, and a second phone point, were fully costed before I placed an order.

Village Baxter makes a monthly charge per independent living unit for services, which from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 will be \$542. This amount equates to 28.6% of the single age pension, and while this is quite manageable, it is much more affordable for a couple with a combined pension, as the single pension is approximately \$11,000 less than a combined pension, almost \$1000 per month less! The single pension is my sole income, apart from interest on a savings account. I am able to purchase food, clothing, car expenses, my unit's electricity account and telephone, and still have funds to donate..

The Village Baxter monthly service charge covers maintenance of my unit, maintenance of the grounds and gardens (75 acres), insurance of my unit, insurance of my contents up to \$10,000, two nurses on staff each day, and one nurse on call throughout the night, the provision of five community centres staffed with hostesses on week days, book and video libraries, bowling green, gymnasium, a shop, a café, a day care centre with activities for the elderly when carers need a break, the Village Chapel, the Village bus which runs at least four circuits all day, between two major shopping centres at no extra cost to residents, and a very caring, supportive and accessible administration.

In summary, there are over 700 residents at Village Baxter, the majority in independent living units, with the later options of bed-sitter apartments, a low care hostel, and a high care hospital. A number of residents have lived here close to 30 years, and still are extremely happy, as I am after 17 months.

To the credit of the unsalaried Board Members, Management, and Administration and staff, the Village Baxter, towards the end of 2015, received the highest Australian Achiever Awards gong for the best retirement village in Australia. It was certainly well deserved.

I love it here, and have not one complaint!

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Geoff Hansen.

Geoff Hansen

PS. As you are seeking information from us, the public, to help you carry out your responsibilities, it would have been a nice gesture to provide a reply paid envelope or service, to encourage more to respond.