

03/06/2016

Hello:

My name is George Stephenson. My telephone No. is [REDACTED]

I live in what is called a "Lifestyle Village" it actually operates as a Caravan Park, under The Residential Tenancies Act (Vic)

Security Of Tenure

I own my dwelling with a shared equity agreement and I rent the land on which it stands. My dwelling is classed as a "Moveable Dwelling" though to move it would be very difficult and costly. The term of my tenure ends on the 31st. December 2065, though I am uncertain as to how that might be affected should the "Village" be sold and the land converted into another commercial enterprise.

Recommendation

I believe that there should be separate stand alone legislation in Victoria for villages such as mine, as exists in all other States in Australia, to guard against such an outcome.

Design

I am also concerned that although my mobility is reasonable at the moment, it is deteriorating and I have been advised that I will need two knee replacements in the not too distant future. At present the owners say that to construct a ramp on the outside of the dwelling is not aesthetically pleasing! In some cases it would prove to be very difficult if not impossible by design and principally because the dwellings are placed on concrete pads and then brick footings, resulting in two high steps to gain access. This is something which perhaps I should have considered at the time of entering the village, but at that time I was not wanting to look for negatives (I liked the village and still do very much) but it was not something that was pointed out to me by the management prior to purchasing the dwelling. I simply want to extend the time I can live in my present home within the village.

Recommendation

I believe that in future the design of the homes intended for my type of village should reflect that they are likely to be purchased by the elderly and that they will continue to age and that their mobility issues will alter. Also other design improvements to be considered could include, wider doorways, a flat and easy access to showers, positioning of light switches and sockets and above all ramp access to the dwelling and the internal design to be wheelchair accessible also.

There should also be a present flexibility with the owners and management to facilitate some alteration in existing properties. Surely it would be in the owners best interests to be flexible to promote the village, to offer it as the best model, one that cares for the ongoing needs of elderly people.

Sale Of Property

I would also like to see something put in place so that when the time comes to move from my home to a place of care, due to ill health or an inability to look after myself in a satisfactory manner.

At present it is very difficult to sell a second hand home due largely to the fact that it is more financially viable for the owner to sell a new home. I cannot sell my home with shared equity, so as a prospective buyer why would you buy a second hand home when you can buy a new one with shared equity? Eventually the village may run out of new lots but until then this is the situation. So at the moment the management are in my opinion reluctant to push the sale of a second hand home, so if I cannot sell my home how then can I fund my need for an aged care facility? Furthermore even if I manage to vacate my home I am still liable to pay the site fees for twelve months or until I sell if that is less than twelve months and not even at a reduced rate. Consider please that I am no longer using any utilities nor am I using any of the communal facilities!

Recommendation

I would recommend that second hand homes should be able to be sold with shared equity and a more vigorous attempt be made by the owners and management to sell. Also once the property is vacated, site fees should apply only for three months and payable only at the point of sale. If the property still proves difficult to sell could the equity that I hold in my home be used to fund my aged care facility?

Management Training

Briefly some form of proper training should be mandatory for managers of villages such as mine. Currently there is none.

Recommendation

A recognised training programme which encompasses the needs of elderly people and instructs how to approach the elderly with the respect and dignity that they deserve.

Thank you.