

SA retirement village information for residents and prospective residents

Retirement villages checklist

General issues

- Have you discussed your decision to enter a retirement village with family, friends, your financial or legal adviser or organisations such as Catalyst Foundation (formerly Seniors Information Service) or the South Australian Retirement Villages Residents Association (SARVRA)?
- Is the village in close proximity to family, friends, activities that are important to you?
- What public, community or village transport is available and how easy is it to access?
- Is there a residents' committee? (ask the operator for the name and phone number of the chairperson so that you can contact them and ask questions about the village e.g. have they found the operator supportive, are issues responded to quickly, what do they see as the good/bad points of the village, are residents actively involved in making village rules?) etc.
- Does the operator or the residents' committee have a copy of the minutes of the residents' committee's last annual meeting? If so, could a copy be given to you?
- Does the village have other types/levels of accommodation available at the same site e.g. serviced apartments, supported care or residential aged care facilities? What are the requirements and associated costs of accessing these other accommodation options?

Financial matters

- If the residence in which you are interested has not yet been built, is the price fixed, regardless of when building commences?
- To what are you entitled if you pay a deposit?
- Will you be charged any costs if you withdraw from the contract?
- What type of ingoing contribution will you be paying i.e. will you receive a payment when you leave the village or is the ingoing contribution a donation?
- Can you afford to pay the ingoing contribution?
- How much will you have to pay in recurrent charges? What other charges can be imposed?
- If you move in as a couple, will you be able to remain or afford to remain at the village in the event that something should happen to one of you e.g. can you meet living costs on a single rather than double pension?



SA retirement village information for residents and prospective residents

- If you form a new partnership or remarry while living in the village and want your new partner to live with you – what is the village’s policy on this and what are the financial and contractual implications?
- Does your financial situation allow for future increases in recurrent charges? Will you still have enough money left to enjoy the quality of life to which you are accustomed?
- What will happen if you cannot meet future recurrent charge increases?
- What costs will be involved when you leave the village e.g. remarketing, refurbishment?
- What are your exit fees calculated on e.g your ingoing contribution or the price paid when the residence is relicensed?
- Do you receive any reimbursement if you make improvements to the residence e.g. building a veranda, installing a security alarm?

Legal implications

- Do you fully understand what the proposed residence contract and associated documents mean and what your rights and responsibilities are?
- Do you need to seek further clarification on any part of the contract? (If so, seek independent legal and/or financial advice).
- Will you be affected if the village is sold?

Building and construction

- Have the community facilities been built? If not, what guarantee do you have that they will be constructed? Is this noted in your contract?
- If construction of your residence is not completed, do you have a say in the design and furnishing of it?
- Are the grounds pleasant and well tended? Who maintains the gardens and who pays?
- Do you have a private garden area? If so, will you be able to manage the upkeep required? What happens if you are no longer able to maintain your garden?
- Which way does the residence face? Where will morning or afternoon sun shine?
- Is there adequate street lighting?
- Is there adequate parking for visitors?
- Do you have a letterbox outside your residence or is there a communal mail box area?



SA retirement village information for residents and prospective residents

- Do the pathways provide clear access and are they level? If they appear cracked or unsafe, when are they being repaired and is there a written statement supporting this?
- Does the residence have steps or stairs? How steep are they? Have handrails been fitted?
- How is garbage collected? Do you have your own bin? Where do you put it for collection? Is it close by?
- Is there a recycling system available? How does it work?
- Is there noticeable noise from road traffic, aircraft, trains or the surrounding area e.g. factories, schools, shops, other homes?
- What is the zoning for the area surrounding the village?
- Is the residence well located in relation to other residences and community facilities? Will emergency services be able to reach it?
- Is the residence designed to suit the use of a shower chair, walking aid or wheelchair should you have or need one in the future? Are door and passageways wide enough to accommodate your changing needs? If not, can the residence be modified easily? Who would pay?
- Does the bathroom have a bathtub and/or shower? How deep is the bathtub? Will you be able to manage getting in and out without assistance?
- Does the residence have safety rails in the bathroom and toilet? Will the operator allow them to be fitted?
- Does the residence run on gas, electricity or both?
- Does the residence have heating installed? What type is it and what are the approximate running costs?
- Is the residence air-conditioned? If not, can you install an air conditioning unit? Are there any restrictions on the type of system which can be installed? Who covers the cost of purchase, installation and/or maintenance?
- Does the residence come with any appliances supplied e.g. washing machine, fridge? If so, whose responsibility is it to maintain and/or replace them?
- Does the residence have security doors and/or windows fitted? If not, can they be fitted and at whose expense?
- Have you checked that all windows and doors open and close easily?
- Are there any cracks in the walls?
- Is the exterior and interior paintwork in good condition? Who maintains it?
- Do you like the colour scheme? Can it be changed?



SA retirement village information for residents and prospective residents

- Are the floor coverings in good condition?
- Do you like the curtains/light fixtures? Can you change them? What do you do with the existing fixtures?
- Are the rooms large enough to accommodate your existing furniture e.g. lounge suite, wardrobes, bed and side tables, fridge/freezer, dining table? (Measure to make certain).
- Is the telephone connected? Where is the outlet and is there an additional outlet beside the bed? If not, can one be installed and at whose expense?
- What storage cupboards are there e.g. pantry, linen press, built-in wardrobes?
- Can you reach the cupboards without needing to stand on something?
- Does the residence have a laundry or is the laundry communal?
- Do you have your own clothesline or is it communal?
- Is there an intercom system fitted in the residence?

Health and welfare

- Is there any assistance or facility available if you get sick?
- What happens if you are no longer able to care for yourself?
- Is the village in a location where you can still easily access your own doctor?
- Can you access community services e.g. Domiciliary Care, Meals on Wheels?
- Does the village have an emergency alarm system fitted to each residence? How is it answered and are there penalties for false alarms?
- Does the village have written emergency procedures e.g. for accessing ambulance, fire evacuation or police attendance?
- Is there easy access to your residence for emergency vehicles or persons?

Activities and amenities

- Will the village rules affect your existing lifestyle?
- Can you have friends and grandchildren stay with you? Are there any restrictions?
- Will you be able to continue your hobbies e.g. music, gardening, swimming, bowling, games, craft work, woodwork?
- Are any pets permitted and if so, what type of pets?
- Does the village have regular resident functions and/or outings?



