

## **the way we live now**

The kids are gone, you've left the workforce and you're thinking about where to spend your retired years. It's one of the most difficult choices you'll make. And everyone's different. Some people prefer to stay in the family home, while others like the idea of a granny flat.

But for many Australians a retirement village has great appeal.

Retirement villages cater for the needs of Australians aged 55 or over and no longer working full time. The villages vary enormously – from self-care to fully serviced units, where meals, house-cleaning, laundry and personal care are provided.

The case for:

- regular social contact with like-minded people
- leisure activities on your doorstep
- no more lawn mowing nor cleaning the swimming pool
- economic benefits from sharing facilities
- security and a degree of independence
- some villages provide transport for shopping and social activities.

The case again:

- living close to others
- restrictions on pets or visitors
- rules which are there for the benefit of all the residents so as to maintain standards in the village
- may be remote from public transport
- complex finances.

It's a personal choice. Some people may find the rules restrictive, while others will love the chance to meet new people.

### **owning a unit**

Ownership can be complex, so consult a solicitor experienced in the law concerning retirement villages.

Your solicitor should know about:

- contracts and the code of practice
- state or territory laws covering:
  - village management
  - up-front disclosure
  - financial transparency
  - residency agreements
- cooling-off periods
- residents' financial interests
- dispute resolution
- right to a management voice.

### **what if you want to sell?**

Life changes and it's no different when you're retired. You might have the opportunity to move in with your family. Or even move overseas.

Buyers tend to look for a stable management, attractive surroundings, and relevant services and activities. They also need to take into account the age of the village (which could affect resale value); the design of the accommodation eg Is it an apartment with lifts? Is it a townhouse with stairs? Is it easy to access common areas such as a clubhouse and swimming pool? You won't pay tax on any capital gain. But once you've taken into account all the fees, you may get back less than you paid, even if your unit has appreciated.

### **the devil is in the detail**

- Check the contract carefully.
- Are you entitled to a capital gain?
- How long will you pay maintenance fees if the unit sits empty?
- Who is in charge of the sale – the Village Management or your own Estate Agent?
- Is there a guaranteed payout if the unit is not sold?
- Who pays for refurbishments?

### **lifestyle, lifestyle, lifestyle**

A retirement village isn't about the money. It's about enjoying a comfortable retirement in the company of like-minded friends. And it's about keeping yourself active with a wide range of leisure activities.

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