

MACLEAY VALLEY VILLAGE

COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES RESOLUTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

The purpose of a Complaints and Disputes Resolution policy and procedure is to ensure that Retirement Living staff undertake a transparent process in the resolution of a complaint or disputes were other internal efforts to resolve the issue have not been successful.

As Village Operator, we endeavour to ensure that third party avenues are cost effective and in a manner that is fair and reasonable to all parties involved. When the resolution of a complaint or dispute is unsuccessful, and the complainant/s remain dissatisfied, the complainant/s will be guided through other options and avenues to resolve the complaint. All appropriate steps are taken to support the complainant/s to resolve the complaint or dispute.

2. Scope

We have differentiated the terms 'Complaints Handling and Resolution' and 'Dispute Resolution' to ensure the process clearly articulates an escalation from an internal complaint handling process to a dispute resolution process.

This policy applies to all of our staff in the handling and resolution of complaints and disputes in relation to Retirement Living.

All staff will understand the Complaints and Dispute Resolution policy and procedure to guide residents in the process.

3. Definition

Dispute – an unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation.

Complaint – as defined in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Guidelines for complaint management in organisations (AS/NZS 10002:2014), are “expressions of dissatisfaction” made to or about an organisation related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

A complaint or matters not covered by this Policy are:

- staff grievances;
- resident to resident grievance;
- responses to requests for feedback about the standard of our service provision;
- reports of problems or wrongdoing merely intended to bring a problem to our notice with no expectation of a response;
- requests for information.

4. Policy context

We support residents to retire in a safe, convenient and caring environment within the framework of the Retirement Villages Act (1999) and Retirement Villages Regulations (2017).

We endeavour to ensure that policies and procedures for the management of complaints and disputes is open and responsive to any complaints or suggestions for continuous improvement made by all stakeholders be it a resident, or a person acting on a resident's behalf. We welcome feedback and strive to maintain a complaints culture where

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stakeholders can openly access the system and know it is resolution focused. We endeavour to promote a blame free culture around complaint handling while upholding our values of Respect, Integrity, Compassion and Connection.

5. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide governing oversight and directions for complaints and dispute resolution and promote a holistic and best practise approach.
Village Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge complaints or disputes within five (5) business days of becoming aware of the complaint or dispute. • Manage complaints or disputes within 10 business days. • Provide adequate training, support, and direction to key staff responsible for dispute resolution. • Review and report on any arising disputes internally and externally as required. • Escalate disputes to the Board of the Operator and to legal counsel as required. • Understand contributing factors that may have led to the dispute and implement changes for improvement, arising from the learnings of individual disputes.
All Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware and comply with this policy and the procedure. • Report and provide feedback to the Operator. • Provide suggestions to management on ways to improve the organisation's complaints management system in the aim to proactively avoid a complaint escalating to a dispute. • Assist in the implement changes arising from the learnings of individual disputes as directed by the Operator.

6. How to make a complaint

Retirement Living Residents

As a resident, you can speak to the Village Manager and raise any concerns. There is also the Resident's Committee which operates on behalf of the residents. There are also dispute resolution and complaint processes through the Department of Fair Trading. We encourage residents in the first instance to raise any concerns with the Village Manager.

All complaints and disputes are handled in a confidential and non-judgemental environment where there is no cause for any participant to fear retribution by being engaged in the complaint or dispute process. Residents are supported to exercise their fundamental right to complain without consequence.

7. Options to escalate an unresolved complaint

Many disputes can be resolved quickly in the early stages if discussed openly. We encourage residents in the first instance to raise any concerns with the Village Manager. But if the Village Manager is unable to resolve the complaint, other options are available to resolve the complaint or dispute.

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The Retirement Villages Act allows resolution of disputes through mutually agreeable ways for both involved parties. Options include, mediation, retirement village complaints service or to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Information on the options are available from the Department website: <https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/housing-and-property/retirement-villages/living-in-a-retirement-village/retirement-village-disputes>.

8. Documentation

Under Rule 29 effective, as the Operator must keep a record of the details of complaints and disputes raised in the village for at least 5 years. These records will be kept confidential and will be securely destroyed as required.