



# RETIREMENT LIFE

ISSUE 1: SEPTEMBER 2023



retirementlife.co.nz

## WELCOME MESSAGE FROM JOHN COLLYNS

Dear residents,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *Retirement Life*, a newsletter proudly brought to you by the Retirement Villages Association (RVA).

As the industry organisation representing 96% by unit number in New Zealand, we are passionately committed to ensuring that retirement living is an enriching and deeply fulfilling experience for New Zealanders.

We know retirement living is a popular choice for older New Zealanders seeking companionship, community, safety and a hassle-free lifestyle. More than 50,000 Kiwis like you now call retirement villages home and 100 people are making the move every week.

And independent research shows nearly 90 per cent of residents are satisfied or very satisfied with village living.

So, it's a great time to launch *Retirement Life*.

This newsletter has been launched with a single purpose in mind: to keep you informed about the latest developments and updates within the retirement villages sector in New Zealand.

Our mission is to deliver you a wealth of accurate, balanced, and comprehensive information across a wide range of topics. We firmly believe that well-informed residents are empowered residents, equipped to make decisions that enrich and enhance their retirement village experience.

In this edition, you can look forward to expert insights and articles spanning various aspects of retirement living.

We also introduce you to a new initiative, the Retirement Village Residents' Council, an independent body that will serve as an advocate for the collective interests of retirement village residents nationwide.

You will find information on the recent discussion paper on the retirement villages sector released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and also some heart-warming community stories, giving you an opportunity to delve into the experiences of your fellow residents.

These pieces are designed to keep you informed, engaged, and inspired as you navigate your retirement journey.

We believe accurate and balanced information forms the bedrock of a resilient and vibrant retirement village community. With your active participation and feedback, we hope to build a vibrant, positive and constructive publication that helps contribute to the quality of life for everyone within our retirement villages.

With warm regards,



**John Collins**

Executive Director, Retirement Villages Association



## INDUSTRY UPDATES AND REFORMS

### Review of the Retirement Villages Act: an update

In August, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a review of the Retirement Villages Act 2003.

The discussion paper on the retirement village sector is an important and positive contribution to shaping the future of retirement village living in New Zealand.

It has picked up most of the substantial reforms the sector is already voluntarily rolling out in retirement villages across the country. These include:

- amending Occupation Rights Agreements (ORAs), the contract between an operator and resident, to eliminate any unfair clauses;
- making it clear which chattels should be the operator's responsibility for replacement, and which are the resident's responsibility; and
- introducing the compulsory disclosure of information and financial implications when residents transfer to care facilities.

The discussion paper also proposes that the ORA be partially standardised where possible, and the disclosure statement be replaced with one or two shorter documents. The RVA's own Key Terms Summary has been highlighted as a model.

Ultimately, the discussion paper preserves the integrity of the successful retirement village model, which is the reason why retirement village living is so popular.

Other proposals in the discussion paper also reflect the RVA's recommended approach, in particular relating to residents moving out of a village.

This includes:

- village outgoings and fixed deductions (Deferred Management Fee) to cease being charged either immediately or no later than four weeks following vacation; and
- no right to pass on capital loss unless residents also have the benefit of capital gain.

The vast majority of retirement villages have already implemented substantial changes to the way they operate:

- for villages with more than 50 units, more than three quarters have no weekly fees once a resident vacates a unit;
- almost two-thirds of villages do not continue to accrue a Deferred Management Fee once the unit is vacated; and
- 90 per cent of villages have removed any capital loss clauses where the resident does not share any capital gain.

More than 70 per cent of villages also make a compensatory payment when the capital sum remains unpaid for an extended period of time.





## Mandatory buy-backs

The one area where the RVA disagrees with an option mooted by HUD is around mandatory buy-backs.

Requiring operators to hold cash or a line of credit to be able to pay residents out within any specific time frame will lead to significant additional costs, and possible business failure, in particular for smaller village operators in regional New Zealand.

Most units are relicensed within six months, and fewer than 10 per cent (based on 2021 data) take more than nine months.

Rather than penalising the efficient as well as the tardy by imposing a statutory deadline for refunding the outgoing residents' capital and the associated significant costs, we believe that operators paying interest on the outstanding amount after nine months is a more appropriate solution.

It is pleasing that HUD includes this as an option and is one we strongly support.



## Next steps

The RVA remains committed to ensuring the best outcomes for retirement village residents and operators alike and we will be providing a submission to HUD.

If you have any feedback or questions, please get in touch with your village manager.

If you have any thoughts about the review, we would love to hear them! Please reach out to Executive Director, John Collins at [john@retirementvillages.org.nz](mailto:john@retirementvillages.org.nz) to share your opinion.

We would love to hear from you.

Alternatively, you can provide your feedback direct to HUD:

Online submission: <https://consult.hud.govt.nz/policy-and-legislation-design/review-of-retirement-villages-act-2003/consultation/>

Download PDF survey: [https://consult.hud.govt.nz/policy-and-legislation-design/review-of-retirement-villages-act-2003/user\\_uploads/retirement-villages-submissions-form---8-august.pdf](https://consult.hud.govt.nz/policy-and-legislation-design/review-of-retirement-villages-act-2003/user_uploads/retirement-villages-submissions-form---8-august.pdf)

# RETIREMENT VILLAGE RESIDENTS' COUNCIL

## Empowering Retirement Village Residents: Introducing the Retirement Village Residents' Council

In the heart of every retirement village a vibrant community thrives, and your voice matters. That's why we are thrilled to introduce the Retirement Village Residents' Council, a new initiative that promises to amplify the collective voice of retirement village residents across the country. In this article, we'll delve into the details of this independent body and its mission to empower and advocate for residents.

### A New Voice for Retirement Village Residents

We are of course aware that there is already an association for retirement village residents. Many residents have told us that they do not feel fully represented by it or have found it difficult to interact with. We believe there is room for all voices to be represented, and at the RVA, we think it's essential to understand what residents want and need.

The purpose of the Residents' Council is to promote effective communication, engagement, and collaboration between village residents, management, the RVA, and relevant stakeholders within the community.

The Council has been established with a single goal in mind: to serve as an advocate for the collective interests of retirement village residents nationwide. It is a platform where their concerns find a home, their opinions are valued, and their ideas can shape the future. More than a council, it's a community where decisions can be made to ensure that retirement village residents reap the full benefits of their chosen lifestyle.

Deborah Hart, an accomplished professional with a diverse background, has taken the helm as the Independent Chair of the Council. She brings a wealth of experience as a lawyer, director and chief executive. She is currently, among other things,

chair of the independent review of New Zealand's electoral laws and chair of the Consumer Advocacy Council. Deborah's commitment to the cause is unwavering, and she believes in the council's potential to make a significant impact:

"I am excited to lead this important initiative. The Retirement Village Residents' Council is a special opportunity to give residents a powerful voice, and I am eager to help them to address their concerns and advocate for their needs."

Nominations for the Council have been sought from retirement villages and their residents throughout the country. Ms Hart will make all the appointments, ensuring that the Council comprises individuals who have a genuine interest in policy matters, possess a deep understanding of the retirement village sector, and can impartially represent the views of their fellow residents. It is envisaged that they will be leaders within their village communities, individuals with mana, and each dedicated to ensuring that the Council is a true reflection of the rich diversity found in retirement villages nationwide.

This commitment to diversity extends beyond mere words; it is a driving force behind the Council's mission. The goal is to ensure that the Council's composition is as varied as possible, encompassing differences in gender, age, ethnicity, disability, background, and geographic regions.

A defining characteristic of the Council is its independence. The terms of reference for the Council make it clear that while the chairperson and secretary and all meeting and logistical costs will be funded by the RVA, the Council will be free to express its opinions and shall be under no expectation from any party as to its outcomes.

It can make public statements, without any expectation or control from any party, including the RVA. This commitment to transparency and autonomy ensures that the needs of residents will be put first.



The Council is not just another advisory body; it is a dynamic platform for retirement village residents to share their thoughts and insights with stakeholders, including the RVA. It offers a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to engage directly with residents, gaining valuable insights into their needs, desires, and vision for the future.

As the Retirement Village Residents' Council takes its first steps, we invite you to join us in supporting this exciting initiative. Together, we can ensure that retirement village residents have the voice and representation they deserve.

In Deborah's words:

"I look forward to working with the Retirement Village Residents' Council, and I encourage all stakeholders to get involved."

For more information and updates on the Council's initiatives, please email [info@residentscouncil.org.nz](mailto:info@residentscouncil.org.nz).

Let's continue to build a bright future for retirement village residents together.





## RESIDENTS' SPOTLIGHT

### Embracing life's next chapter: Tom Parsons tells us his retirement village journey

The proposed changes to the Retirement Villages Act 2003 (the Act), associated regulations and codes, make a lot of sense. And in fact, they reflect changes already made by many retirement villages across the country.

Retirement village living is very popular well-regulated and, having settled in a retirement village in Auckland's Three Kings area with my wife, I find the concerns raised by some stakeholders in the media to be far from representative of our experience.

In fact, I view the use of isolated cases as extremely unhelpful. This kind of fearmongering could needlessly distress residents and their families and potentially dissuade older individuals from considering the move to a retirement village.

Drawing from my background in the defence force and education, our decision to move to a retirement village was a meticulous one. Our first query was, "Which one?" We crafted an exhaustive list of requirements, including proximity to main routes, accessibility to the airport, efficient public transport, and nearby healthcare facilities. Our search involved visiting over 100 retirement villages in Auckland. The RVA website served as a valuable resource, aiding our decision-making process.

Aware of the importance of understanding our choices, we consulted a solicitor before signing our ORA. Our assurance stemmed from a clear comprehension of the terms, including the guarantee that 70 per cent of our ORA payment would ultimately be passed on to our children. While property values may fluctuate, the fundamental query remains: Is it about maximising monetary returns or optimising one's quality of life for the time ahead?

Our weekly fees remain fixed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), covering maintenance, rates, insurance, gardening, and more. Any household issues are promptly resolved, offering us a hassle-free living environment. Our apartment presents stunning views of One Tree Hill and Manukau Harbour, a setting we've come to appreciate for its security and the freedom to live life as we choose.

Our initial research, however thorough, didn't prepare us for the depth of enjoyment we would derive from the village's amenities. From a bar and



restaurant to fitness facilities, a bowling green, and even a movie theatre, the village's offerings have exceeded our expectations. Moreover, the vibrant community we've found here, characterised by diverse backgrounds and shared interests, has been an unforeseen but cherished aspect of our retirement.

Based on our firsthand experience, the issues highlighted by some stakeholders appear to be atypical. Painting all retirement villages with the same brush due to a few negative cases is an oversimplification. While the model isn't flawless, the uniqueness of each village should be acknowledged. Disagreements regarding the time taken to relicence an ORA exist it's crucial to remember that probate procedures contribute to delays, often wrongly attributed to village management.

I certainly don't agree with people still paying fees after they have stopped using the facility; however, it's heartening to note that the RVA has introduced voluntary reforms, including ceasing weekly charges upon contract termination or resident departure.

To prospective retirement village residents, I stress the importance of diligence. Visit potential villages, engage with residents and staff, and grasp the terms of your ORA. Don't be swayed by alarmist tales – a well-chosen retirement village can indeed significantly enhance your quality of life.



# VILLAGE FOCUS

## Rising Above: Resilience in the Face of Flooding Chaos

In a tale of resilience and community strength, some Auckland villages faced a harrowing crisis in January 2023. As CEO of one retirement village company, Jeremy Nicoll made his way home through the stormy Auckland weather, little did he know that he was about to lead his team through an extraordinary test of their disaster management planning.

The floodwaters, unleashed by torrential rains, wreaked havoc across Parklane village in Forrest Hill and other locations. Roads closed, bridges were impassable, and chaos reigned. Amid the turmoil, Jeremy's phone buzzed incessantly with urgent calls – flooding had struck. Parklane was submerged, and two other villages were grappling with power outages and surface water.

Undeterred by the challenges, Jeremy led a team of dedicated staff members, a mix of village personnel, staff from other nearby villages, and support office employees. Arriving at Parklane through treacherous roadblocks and flooded streets around 8pm, they were greeted by waist-high floodwaters that had engulfed villas. Residents, staff, and even neighbours rallied together to evacuate affected residents. With darkness descending, the challenges grew as they waded through chest-high water, house to house.

The teams formed organically: one group ensured everyone was accounted for, another checked the needs of evacuated residents, and another worked to rehouse those displaced. Fortunately, the floodwaters receded by 11pm, ending the acute emergency phase. The damage was extensive, with ground floor apartments, communal spaces, and numerous villas rendered uninhabitable. Despite this, the spirit of collaboration remained unwavering.

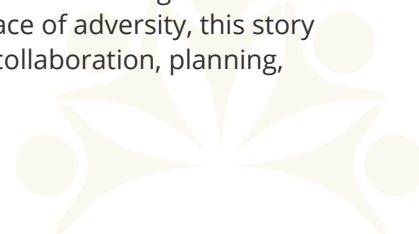
Saturday brought daylight and a clearer picture of the devastation. Ground floor apartments were under water, prized possessions were lost, and infrastructure was damaged. The village's close relationships with contractors built up over the years proved invaluable as they swiftly initiated cleanup operations. Amidst the chaos, staff provided meals and support to residents, ensuring their wellbeing.



Through it all, disaster management planning proved robust, even if adapting to the unpredictability of each emergency was challenging. Jeremy acknowledged the complexity of rehousing residents and the difficulty of communicating amid evolving circumstances. Mental health check-ins for first responders were a crucial step, recognising the emotional toll of such extreme events.

Looking forward, Jeremy emphasised gratitude – for resilient residents, dedicated staff, and the relatively clean floodwaters. Lessons are still emerging, with a follow-up group distilling learnings for the industry. The road to recovery will be long, yet the Parklane community stands strong. In a future article, the experiences of residents and staff will be explored, shedding more light on their resilience.

For now, it's a timely reminder for all retirement village managers to review emergency planning and consider the impact such events might have on their communities. In the face of adversity, this story underscores the power of collaboration, planning, and the human spirit.





There has been a lot of talk about retirement village living in the media recently and we want to ensure you are well and properly informed.

**Q - What would happen to our unit if the village is sold to another organisation?**

When you chose to live in a village, you were asked to enter into an ORA that sets out your rights and obligations and those of the owners and managers of the village. If another organisation buys the village, they are obliged to honour these arrangements. In addition, your Statutory Supervisor must consent to the sale of the village, and this will include ensuring the purchaser is a fit and appropriate entity to operate your village.

**Q - Does the village have a residents' committee? What procedures are available to resolve any dispute?**

Many villages have a residents' committee that works with management to maintain or enhance the quality of village life. To participate or not is a matter of personal choice, but residents may enjoy making significant contributions to whatever facets of village life most interest them.

If a dispute arises, village management is available to work with the resident to try to resolve the difference. The RVA offers a disputes resolution process, and a more formal system is set out in the Retirement Villages Act and the Retirement Villages Code of Practice.

**Q - What does the 'outgoings' or weekly fee cover?**

The regular 'outgoings' or weekly fee covers certain running costs of the village. These costs may include the upkeep of the village facilities, maintenance of the village grounds and gardens, staff wages and salaries, statutory charges such as council and water rates, security costs, ACC and public liability insurance, and common area insurance for the entire village.

Many villages have either fixed fees for the term of occupancy or a fee that increases in line with CPI or NZ Super movement.

It's also worth noting that in many villages with a fixed weekly fee, the operator cross-subsidises the residents because costs continue to increase even if the fee doesn't.

**Q - How is the 'outgoings' or weekly fee determined and can it be increased?**

The basis of calculating the 'outgoings' or weekly fee varies from village to village and is fully explained in your ORA. The fee is generally reviewed annually as management plans the budget for the year ahead.

**Q - What happens to our unit or apartment when we leave?**

As with all residential property, unit prices and selling times are determined by the market. However, in a village there are additional factors that may add value to the resale potential of your unit, including stable management and attractive and relevant services and amenities.

The village manager may either take responsibility for or will assist you or your estate in the resale process. The terms of any repayment due to you or your estate will vary from village to village and will be set out in your ORA and were agreed to when you purchased your ORA.

A deferred management fee is usually deducted by the village when your unit is sold. The amount of the fee varies. The salesperson will provide you with an explanation of their terms, including examples.



## RETIREMENT ADVENTURES

### Up the Creak brewing a beer

The brewers at Up the Creak Brew Club may be living in a retirement village and have a few more creaks as the name suggests, but there is nothing wrong with their beer.

That's because their head brewer and teacher John Duncan is a fifth-generation brewer in the region who is helping make all their favourite brews in a tiny brewery at Waimea Plains retirement village.

Village management set up the brewery when they discovered John's expertise as a brewer and now there is a core group of budding brewers turning grain and hops into aromatic brews.

John's brewery heritage began in 1843 in Nelson with his great, great grandfather who established J R Dodson and Son on the corner of Hardy St and Tasman St.

It brewed beer for 115 years with a brewer in every generation, and both John and his brother Nick continued the family tradition.

While Nick was a brewer for DB throughout his working career, John was a brewer at Mac's Brewery in Stoke before setting up Founders Brewery with his wife Carol. Their son Callum is now the sixth-generation brewer in the region and creating award-winning beers for Sprig and Fern in Richmond.

John thought his brewing days were behind him when he moved to the retirement village, but management had other ideas - and he is loving it.

The brewery is tiny, and they produce less than 50 litres of beer each month, but he says it is more about the process rather than drinking the end result - though they enjoy that as well.

"It's learning about microbiology and chemistry and not so much about the alcohol - you can't drink as much at our age."

They brew from scratch, using malted barley or wheat and adding hop pellets to make a range of beers.



"It's a combination of art and science; playing around with ingredients and trying different things. Even on this very small scale, we learn from each brew."

John says a brew is often referred to as 'liquid bread' because it is a mix of grain and yeast, which is why it is no surprise the spent grain is collected by village residents to make into bread and biscuits.

Groups of residents choose a type of beer to make, and so far, golden lager has been popular, though John's personal favourite is a pilsner.

It is not all beer though and women in particular have been involved in producing a couple of ciders in the brewery.

The brewery has created considerable interest in the village and because the age group is around 65 to nineties, John says many turn up simply to enjoy the brewing process.

"We have a core group and encourage others to come and give a hand or watch. We're all busy doing other things as well, so we just fit a brew in when we can."

By Anne Hardie, Waimea Weekly



We're eager to learn about the exciting adventures you've embarked on during your retirement! Whether you've amassed incredible travel tales, dedicated your time to volunteer work, pursued creative endeavours, or acquired new skills, we invite you to share your stories with us. Please send your contributions via email to [amanda@retirementvillages.org.nz](mailto:amanda@retirementvillages.org.nz).



## VILLAGE INNOVATION

### Village electric vehicle fleet plugs into the future

When Christchurch's Park Lane village residents need to take a quick trip to Christchurch city, it's easy with one of the community electric vehicles.

These cars are used by the village's independent residents, so they don't have to own a vehicle.

Village Manager, Leigh Tabak says the increase in electric vehicle use has been pleasing to see.

*"My residents really love to use the vehicles and find them very easy to drive. With petrol prices continuing to rise it's a substantial saving each year for them."*

The increase in resident use has led to an expansion in the fleet, now at 14 with a mix of plug-in EVs and hybrid vehicles to choose from.

As well as shrinking the village's carbon footprint, this futuristic fleet has freed up space that would usually be used for resident car parks. This extra space has enabled a community garden, orchard and full-size bowling green.

Resident Natalie loves 'the Beemer'. She arrived at Park Lane with her trusty Honda Jazz, but that vehicle is no longer needed. The nifty BMWi3 is Natalie's ride of choice.

Head of Sustainability for the village operator, Arveen Horsefield, says the expansion of the electric vehicle fleet over time has shown a real adaptability from residents.

*"Electric vehicles really can contribute to a strong community vibe when it comes to a shared resource. Last minute changes to plans and trips for the day are sometimes made between residents at breakfast time so that everyone can benefit from the cars even when they appear booked up."*

The village recently added two Hyundai Kona vehicles to the fleet, as well as four MGs.

Another nearby village in St Albans has also embraced EVs and three electric vehicles for residents to use. With one Mitsubishi and two Hyundai electric vehicles on offer, this smaller fleet is widely used for both short and day trips.

Read here: <https://www.retirementlife.co.nz/arvida-parks-fleet-of-electric-vehicles>





## COMMUNITY LENS

Calling all residents with a passion for photography! We're excited to introduce a new feature in our upcoming newsletters that will showcase the artistic talents within our community. With each edition, we'll explore a different theme, giving you the chance to share your unique perspective through the lens.

To get us started, we're on the lookout for your heartwarming "Pets and Their People" snapshots. Whether it's a playful pup, a contented cat, or any other furry, feathered, or scaly companion, we invite you to capture the special bonds you share with your pets. Share your high-resolution photos along with a brief description of the delightful moments you've experienced together.

Let's celebrate the love between our residents and their beloved animal friends. Your photo could win a mixed half-dozen case of wine AND be the next star of our newsletter!

Photos can be sent to [amanda@retirementvillages.org.nz](mailto:amanda@retirementvillages.org.nz)



## RETIREMENT VILLAGE PROFITABILITY

with Arie Dekker, Head of Research at Jarden Securities

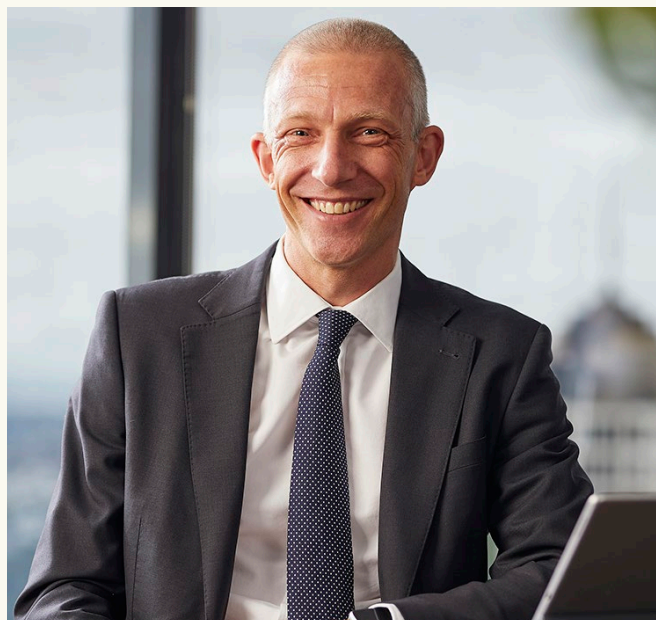
Debate around the profitability of the retirement sector has been increasing recently.

One industry commentator's analysis of the sector declared retirement villages to be pulling in "super-profits".

However, Arie Dekker of Jarden Securities has covered the listed retirement village sector for five years. He's looked at the operating activities and financial outcomes achieved and puts some myths to rest in his article at [stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/opinion-analysis/300925334/are-retirement-villages-really-superprofiters).

Read more:

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/opinion-analysis/300925334/are-retirement-villages-really-superprofiters>



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### Life in Harmony: Graham Kelly's Journey from Politics to Music in Whitby Lakes Retirement Village

Graham Kelly and his late wife Janette moved into Whitby Lakes Retirement Village in 2016 somewhat reluctantly but realising it was a necessity. Graham had increasing mobility issues, and Janette had been diagnosed with Alzheimers. It was a wrench to leave their home and Graham remembers that downsizing was a challenge. Typically, one way he managed that was by sharing his extensive art collection on the corridor walls in his apartment block. As you walk along the corridor there are fascinating reminders of Graham's diplomatic posting as High Commissioner to Canada and his international travels as an MP, trade unionist and activist. His spacious apartment still houses his favourite books and paintings, while many other books have taken up residence in the village library. The main clinchers about Whitby Lakes for Graham, apart from it being near where he currently lived, were the promise of a care centre and the unique advantage of having a shopping centre right on the village boundary; despite his mobility issues, he's able to be independent and do his shopping easily.

Graham's eight decades of life have been threaded through with several recurring themes: music, family, activism and politics.

Music has always been central for him; he learned the piano as a child and started his first dance band in his teens. Graham still plays keyboard once a month for drinks and nibbles in the village; "I try to play songs residents know and recognise – I'll give them hints, like 'This was made famous by Frank Sinatra in the 1970s' and they'll recognise the tune." Every once in a while, the five-piece Graham Kelly Swing Band, plus vocalist, puts on a toe-tapping concert for residents. During his Parliamentary career Graham arranged regular fundraising concerts for the Mary Potter Hospice, involving MPs from across the House and Parliamentary staffers, and on his subsequent Canadian posting he played regularly at diplomatic parties, often accompanying



the Japanese Ambassador who was a crooner and guitar-player. Graham still helps organise concerts for the Wellington Jazz Club at Meow Café and Bar and plays with the re-established New Valley Stompers.

Graham's career direction as a unionist and activist was also set in his teens; in his first job, as an office boy, he went to the manager to ask for some relief from temperatures in the forties for the workers – he won the argument, and that sparked a lifelong commitment to improving working and living conditions, and his career as a unionist and politician. His 25 years in the union movement included ten years with the Clerical Workers' Union followed by fifteen years as Secretary of the Shop Employees Union, working with Sonja Davies who was an organiser there. Graham learned how to take risks and gain advantage in an environment where the power balance was one-sided: "you had to use innovative tactics for the non-militant unions in order to get results."



He credits those union years with giving him courage and backbone, and his activism marched alongside the union work. The equal pay campaign honed his skills, as did other contemporary areas of activism – the peace movement, the nuclear-free Pacific campaign, the 1981 tour protest and previous campaigns to include Māori in All Blacks touring sides, and the homosexual law reform campaign. Unions like the ones Graham led debated these issues in formal meetings in order to determine their position, which would subsequently be voted on by the members. In addition, he was a trustee and committee member of the International Defence and Aid Fund for South Africa for 25 of the 27 years of Nelson Mandela's imprisonment.

In 1987 Graham was elected to Parliament as Labour MP for Porirua, now Mana electorate, where he focussed on improving life for his constituents. His recently published book, *Keeping the Party in Tune: How Politics and Music Shaped my Life*, details his many campaigns on their behalf and alongside them. During that time, he founded and chaired the Porirua City Community IT Educational Trust. Over nineteen years the Trust trained almost 3,000 unemployed parents on using a computer, providing one for use at home, which benefitted their children as well. In addition, it gave computers to twenty-four low decile schools in Porirua. Graham remembers this initiative with great satisfaction,

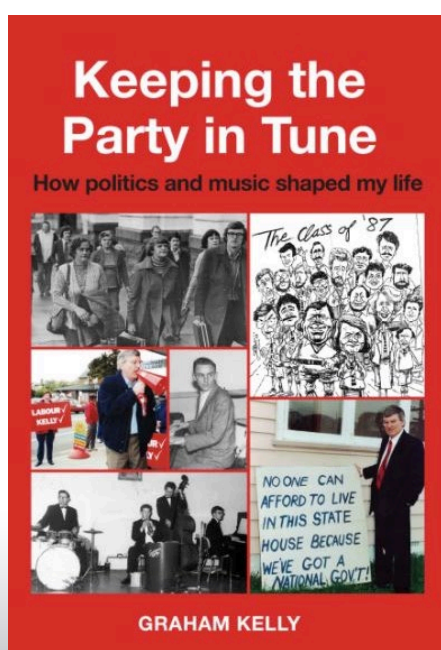
telling me that an unexpected consequence was the way becoming computer literate boosted participants' confidence as well as their employment prospects and consequent earning capability.

From 2003 to 2006 Graham was NZ's High Commissioner to Canada. He remembers his diplomatic posting as "a great gig" – not least because it included accreditation to Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Graham is a cricket fan. He already had street cred and connections in Canada: "I had helped write most of the defence, trade and foreign affairs policy so I knew my stuff. And I also knew some of the key local politicians, so I had good relationships before we went."

Needless to say, Graham didn't leave behind any of what he'd learned in his career when he retired and moved into Whitby Lakes Retirement Village. Just as his music came with him, so did his commitment to social justice and fairness, and good process.

He was involved in much of the initial work the NZRVR Association did to advocate for reforms. He believes that many residents may not feel confident raising issues or "making a fuss", and also questions how well some village operators understand the Equal Pay Act. He's pleased to see that Ngāti Toa, main owners of Whitby Lakes Retirement Village, have now signed up to the Living Wage. And he's still using those organising skills, but now he's organising the Graham Kelly Swing Band concerts. With his musical career having come full circle, he's playing with some of the people he played with when he was much younger, and also one of his sons, Brian, who plays trumpet and trombone. Graham tells me, "Playing the piano and having to organise things – music, musicians – keeps you young." It's certainly working for Graham, who still has the same heart for music and justice as he had when he started on his career.

Written by Janet Brown, Head and Heart Ltd





## ENHANCING RETIREMENT VILLAGE EXCELLENCE

### Te Ara Professional Development programme

In the ever-evolving landscape of retirement living, where communities are becoming more sophisticated and support models more intricate, the demand for professional village management is at an all-time high. The retirement sector is witnessing a resurgence in interest as populations age, driving the need for better qualified and more skilled staff to ensure you receive the exceptional care and experience you deserve.

This is where the Te Ara Professional Development programme comes in – an innovative initiative designed to elevate the competence and expertise of staff in retirement villages everywhere. Developed in collaboration with the DCM Institute and the RVA, Te Ara Institute offers a comprehensive, integrated, and ongoing professional development experience.

At the heart of every thriving retirement village is effective communication, respect for residents, and dedicated staff. The Te Ara programme understands that investing in village management goes beyond finances; it's a commitment to your wellbeing and satisfaction.

Did you know that the cost of recruiting a new village manager can exceed 50% of their salary? Furthermore, the value of your retirement village is closely tied to the skills and professionalism of its management. To address the challenge of high staff turnover, Te Ara is a beacon of support, designed to equip and engage staff for the long term.

Te Ara Professional Development is more than just training – it's a journey to empower both professionals and operators. With monthly themes and evolving topics that keep up with the industry's changes, staff will stay updated on the latest regulations, operational insights, and marketing strategies.

And many esteemed industry leaders are showing their support. Jane Wrightson, Retirement Commissioner, stresses the importance of training and competence. Brian Peat, President of the Retirement Villages Residents Association, highlights the necessity of resident-focused training.

Suzi Cadigan, Village General Manager of The Sterling Kaiapoi, attests to the transformative power of the Te Ara programme. She shares how investing in professional development not only attracts and retains talented staff, but also empowers them to provide exceptional service to residents. Suzi's experience underscores the programme's impact on staff satisfaction, growth, and overall success.

As we look to the future of retirement village living, we're excited to support retirement village staff's journey of professional development through the Te Ara programme. By investing in staff growth and expertise, villages are dedicated to enhancing your retirement living experience, ensuring that retirement villages remain vibrant and enriching communities.

Has your village manager got involved yet?









## GOOD THINGS

### Skydiving for charity

In an awe-inspiring display of courage and determination, 94-year-old Greenwood Park resident, Jean Crabtree, together with a group of 17 friends and family members, embarked on a thrilling skydiving adventure to raise money for Hato Hono Saint John's ambulance.

With a combined aged of more than 1,100 years, and including four generations from Jean's own family, the group challenged their own limits and soared through the sky from a staggering height of 12,000 feet.

"Skydiving can be scary for some, but there's nothing to be afraid of. I've never said no to a challenge and like to show that anyone, regardless of their age, can achieve something if you put your mind to it," says Jean.

While Jean was completing her third skydive – having previously celebrated her 85th and 90th birthdays with a jump – 96-year-old John Rowlandson was making his skydiving debut and loved every moment of it.

"It was just like sitting in an armchair, looking out the window at a beautiful view."



John said he was able to do two somersaults during the skydive which reminded him of his childhood days when he did gymnastics.

"I used to do gymnastics and every time I'd do a somersault, I usually landed on my backside rather than my feet and I thought this time, there will be no problem with the landing!" he laughed.

The team have raised \$45,000 to date, and Jean and John are already planning their next skydive to celebrate Jean's 100th birthday!



## RECIPE EXCHANGE

We invite you to share the warmth of your kitchens and the stories that accompany your favourite recipes. Our community's culinary traditions are as diverse as they are delightful, and we'd love to showcase them in our upcoming newsletters. Whether it's a treasured family recipe passed down through generations or a dish that holds a special memory, we want to hear your culinary tales. So, dust off those cookbooks, fire up the stovetop, and send us your recipes along with the heartwarming stories that make them special. Together, we'll savour the flavours of our community and share these cherished memories in our upcoming newsletters.

You can send your recipes to [amanda@retirementvillages.org.nz](mailto:amanda@retirementvillages.org.nz)





## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Introducing Griefity: Your Source of Comfort and Support

Griefity is a brand-new organisation with a clear and heartfelt mission: to make a meaningful difference for those going through grief and loss.

In a world where grief and bereavement touch the lives of countless individuals, Griefity emerges as a transformative space where people can discover solace, empathy, and practical assistance during their most challenging moments.

Griefity was founded by a compassionate group of New Zealanders who have personally endured losses. They are driven by a mission to ease the painful journey of grief and provide a much-needed support network for individuals and their loved ones.

#### What Griefity offers:

- Griefity is an online platform dedicated to grief support.
- They provide free resources for anyone facing grief.
- Their resources are developed and endorsed by people who have experienced loss and bereavement themselves.
- Accessible online, at your own convenience.

Visit Griefity at [www.griefity.com](http://www.griefity.com) and take a step towards healing and support during times of grief.



**YOU DON'T HAVE  
TO GO IT ALONE**



## YOUR SIMPLE GUIDE TO VOTING

**In the 2023 general election, you have the opportunity to choose the parties and candidates you want to represent you in Parliament.**

#### Key Voting Dates:

- Voting begins on **Monday, October 2nd**.
- You can vote at any voting location in New Zealand.
- On election day, Saturday, October 14th, all voting places will be open from 9am to 7pm.

#### For Your Convenience:

To make the voting process easier for everyone, the Electoral Commission has created an Easy Read Guide to Voting.

Read the guide here: <https://vote.nz/assets/Alternate-formats-2023-General-Election-/Easy-Read-guide-to-voting.pdf>

Exercise your right to vote and have your say in shaping the future of New Zealand!



## RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Visit the Retirement Life website at **[www.retirementlife.co.nz](http://www.retirementlife.co.nz)** for a seamless and comprehensive source of information catering to all your retirement village inquiries. Whether you're seeking advice or answers, this website has you covered.

Delve into a wealth of topics on the Retirement Life website, including a practical retirement village planning checklist, the significance of seeking legal guidance prior to transitioning to a retirement village, insights into how retirement communities are navigating the challenges posed by Covid-19, and an in-depth roadmap for introducing various advancements and objectives within the industry.

For tailored information specific to your retirement village, don't forget to consult your village manager – they're your best resource for personalised answers.



Join our engaging discussions on social media platforms such as Facebook (**[facebook.com/retirementlifenz](https://facebook.com/retirementlifenz)**), and Instagram. (**[instagram.com/retirementlifenz](https://instagram.com/retirementlifenz)**). We look forward to connecting with you.

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## CONTACT DETAILS

Stay connected with us by subscribing to our newsletter and receiving consistent updates. Simply visit **[www.retirementlife.co.nz/contact](http://www.retirementlife.co.nz/contact)**, send us an email at **[info@retirementvillages.org.nz](mailto:info@retirementvillages.org.nz)**, or give us a call at **04 499 7090** to ensure you're always in the loop.

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## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Your thoughts and experiences matter and we welcome your stories and ideas. Please reach out to **[amanda@retirementvillages.org.nz](mailto:amanda@retirementvillages.org.nz)** via email to share your contributions, whether they be in the form of stories, articles, or suggestions for upcoming editions.

**We're excited to hear from you!**





