

# RVRA Monthly News Bulletin

MAY 2026



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Welcome to this month's Bulletin, which brings together a wide range of issues of importance to retirement village residents across NSW.

This edition marks a special milestone: four years since the RVRA Bulletin moved online. Over that time, it has grown into an important way of keeping residents informed, connected and engaged with the issues affecting village life.

A key focus this month is the changing aged care landscape, particularly the transition to the new Support at Home program. We encourage residents to complete the survey included in this edition so that the experiences of retirement village residents can be clearly understood and represented.

With World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June, we also highlight the serious issue of psychological abuse. Retirement villages should be places of respect, safety and dignity, and it is important that residents know where to seek help if they or someone they know is experiencing mistreatment.

This edition also includes practical information on annual village budgets, including voting requirements, residents' rights to ask questions, and what happens if a budget is rejected.

To support residents further, the RVRA has released a podcast, *Retirement Village Budgets Explained*, featuring our Treasurer, John Rosewarne. A second podcast, *RVRA Research*, features a discussion with James Wiltshire from the DCM Group about the RVRA's survey work and the importance of resident voices in shaping future advocacy.

On a positive note, we celebrate Men's Health Week, the achievements of resident authors at Palm Lake Resort Ballina, and the many ways residents continue to stay active, creative and connected.

We also include articles on artificial intelligence, relationship scams, Be Connected online safety sessions, village visits and recent Board activity.

I hope you find this edition useful, informative and encouraging.

The RVRA remains committed to advocating for fairness, transparency and informed decision-making for all residents. We encourage members to stay engaged, informed and involved in the conversations shaping the future of retirement village living.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Pallant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Roger Pallant**  
**RVRA President**

# Four Years of the RVRA Bulletin

## Informing, Connecting and Advocating

In 2022, amid declining membership and continuing financial pressures, the RVRA Board made the difficult decision to cease producing a printed newsletter and move to an online Bulletin format. Rising production and postage costs meant savings had to be found while still ensuring members continued to receive timely and relevant information.

For many members, the end of the printed publication was disappointing. Like many community and association publications at the time, the Bulletin had to adapt to a rapidly changing environment. There was initial hope that one or two printed editions each year might still be possible, but continuing cost increases quickly made that unrealistic.

That first digital Bulletin arrived at a significant moment for retirement village residents. It marked the winding back of the COVID-19 Public Health Orders that had temporarily exempted operators and residents from certain requirements under the retirement village legislation. The six Ministerial Orders introduced during the pandemic expired on 31 March 2022, and villages returned to operating fully under the requirements of the Retirement Villages legislation. They were challenging times — not only for retirement villages, but for the wider community as well.

Over the past four years the Bulletin has grown into an important source of information for retirement village residents, their families and friends.

Through informative articles, sector

updates, surveys, reports and answers to readers' questions, the Bulletin has helped keep readers stay informed about the evolving retirement village sector.

During 2023, we published 11 editions featuring sector news, updates on the activities of the RVRA Board and topical articles written by Board members.

We also conducted two major online surveys and introduced readers to the newly established Education Centre, funded by the NSW Government, which provided an expanding range of educational resources for residents.

The Bulletin also introduced our popular Question and Answer section, giving members an insight into the kinds of issues regularly raised with the RVRA and the guidance we provide in response.



As we moved into 2025, readership continued to grow. We expanded our content by engaging sector experts across a range of fields and publishing articles on topics including dementia in retirement villages, elder abuse awareness, and casework insights from the Seniors Rights Service.



# Four Years of the RVRA Bulletin

## Informing, Connecting and Advocating

By 2025, the Bulletin had become a major vehicle for communicating the RVRA's advocacy work, particularly in relation to the 2025 Retirement Village Regulation Review and the introduction of the new Aged Care Act. The impact of the Support at Home program has also remained a major topic of discussion well into 2026.

Over these four eventful years, the Bulletin has continued to evolve — and now, in 2026, we are proud to celebrate our Birthday Edition, available as both a flipbook and PDF publication.

Along the way, we have introduced new sections including FAQs, Village Initiatives and Wellbeing. We continue to seek expert commentary, report on developments affecting the retirement village sector and share stories and information that matter to our readers.

Most importantly, we thank you — our members and readers — for your ongoing support.

We hope the Bulletin has helped deepen your understanding of retirement village living and the work undertaken by the dedicated volunteer Board members of the RVRA on behalf of residents across NSW.

In the coming months, we will be surveying our readership to learn what you value most in the Bulletin and what additional topics or features you would like to see in future editions.

**Diane Hart (Ed)**  
**Chair, RVRA Education Centre**  
**RVRA Board Member**

### Spot the signs of a relationship scam



If you think you or someone you know may be in a relationship scam, remember that scammers can be very convincing.

They use feelings to control people and may try to cut them off from friends and family. It is never the victim's fault.

**Help is available.**

**Scam Watch**



The views, opinions and information contained in this publication have been published for the general information of the members of the RVRA. They do not necessarily represent the views of the association. References to legislation are intended as general information only for members and do not, and should not be relied upon as legal advice.

# Snippets from the RVRA Board

## It's our Birthday!!

The Bulletin is four years old and we have plenty to celebrate! Our Birthday edition is trialling a flipbook format which we hope you will find easier to navigate.

## Member's Enquiries

April 2026 was another busy month for enquiries. Board members answered 39 enquiries from members in 33 villages. The largest number of call topics were on Finance and Budgets (19), including Capital Works Fund, Challenging the Budget, and the Voting Process.

A new information sheet on the Capital Works Fund will be in our Members section in the next few months. The Board is busy updating the information sheets and linking the references to the new 2025 Regulation.



## Village Visits



During April our Board members visited several villages in the Sydney metropolitan area. If you wish your village to be included in the Village Visit schedule, please contact Cathy on 1300 787 213 (option 1).

We can schedule a Zoom visit for your residents if you are in a regional area. Talk to Cathy about your requirements.

For enquiries, or to arrange a village visit, ring Cathy on 1300 787 213

# Snippets from the RVRA Board

## Village Budgets

On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026 the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) announced the Consumer Price Index.

The CPI of interest for Retirement Village recurrent charges variation is the Sydney (All groups) CPI, and the increase for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026 was 4.4% per annum.

Many villages have been busy preparing for the Budget meeting, and the Board have been fielding a succession of enquiries regarding meeting procedures and voting.



We have included some of the most frequently asked questions about budgets later in this Bulletin. This might help clarify any concerns you have.

## Podcast



[Watch our podcasts on YouTube](#)



In April we released our first Podcast "*Retirement Village Budgets Explained*" which featured an interview with John Rosewarne, the RVRA Treasurer.

A second podcast titled "*RVRA Research*" has just been released. Our President Roger Pallant was interviewed by James Wiltshire CEO of the DCM Group about the research surveys conducted by the RVRA.

If you have a village story to tell, we would love to hear from you – call Cathy on 1300 787 213 (option 1) and she will arrange for the Bulletin to call you to discuss it.

# Standing Up Against Psychological Abuse

## World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 15<sup>th</sup> June

Each year on 15th June, communities around the world recognise **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** — a time to shine a light on the mistreatment of older people and to encourage respect, dignity and safety for all seniors.

When people think about elder abuse, they often think of physical or financial abuse. However, psychological abuse is one of the most common and least recognised forms.

The RVRA's [Ageing Without Fear](#) report found that many retirement village residents had experienced behaviour that left them feeling intimidated, ignored, humiliated or powerless.



Psychological abuse can include bullying, threats, intimidation, humiliation, exclusion, manipulation or repeatedly dismissing a person's concerns.

In retirement villages, it may also occur when residents feel unheard, pressured into decisions, or afraid to speak up because they fear repercussions.

The Ageing Without Fear report highlighted the emotional toll this behaviour can have. Residents described anxiety, stress and helplessness.

Some became reluctant to raise concerns or take part in village life because they feared conflict or retaliation. Others said the experience affected their mental health, confidence and overall wellbeing.

Retirement villages should be places of safety, community and respect. Operators, managers, resident committees and residents all have a role to play in ensuring villages remain supportive and respectful.

Psychological abuse is particularly damaging because it is often invisible. Emotional harm can linger for years, and many hesitate to report it because they do not want to be labelled “troublemakers” .

The RVRA continues to advocate for residents' rights and greater awareness of psychological abuse in retirement villages.

This World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, let us recommit to creating communities built on kindness, respect and understanding, where older people can age with dignity and without fear.



# Standing Up Against Psychological Abuse

## World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 15<sup>th</sup> June

If you or someone you know is experiencing psychological abuse, it is important to speak with someone you trust. Support may be available through resident associations, advocacy groups, family members, community organisations or elder abuse support services.

Abuse is never acceptable, and support services below can also help family members, friends and carers who are worried about someone else.

### National Support Services

If anyone is in immediate danger, call 000.

#### **1800RESPECT**

Australia's national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling service.

Phone: 1800 737 732 (24/7)

Text: 0458 737 732

Also offers online chat and video calls.

**Lifeline** Australia Crisis support and suicide prevention.

Phone: 13 11 14 (24/7)

**Beyond Blue** Mental health support for anxiety, depression and distress. Phone: 1300 22 4636

#### **MensLine Australia**

Telephone and online counselling for men experiencing family violence, relationship issues or emotional distress.

Phone: 1300 78 99 78

### Elder Abuse Support

#### **1800ELDERHelp**

National elder abuse phone line connecting callers to services in their state or territory.

Phone: 1800 353 374

#### **NSW Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline**

Information, advice and reporting for abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and adults with disability.

Phone: 1800 628 221

#### **Seniors Rights Service**

NSW Advocacy, legal advice and support for older people.

Phone: 1800 424 079

#### **Report**

To access the report from the RVRA's Ageing Without Fear survey go to:

[Ageing Without Fear](#)





## ARAS's 19th Annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) Online Forum

Tuesday 23rd June 2026

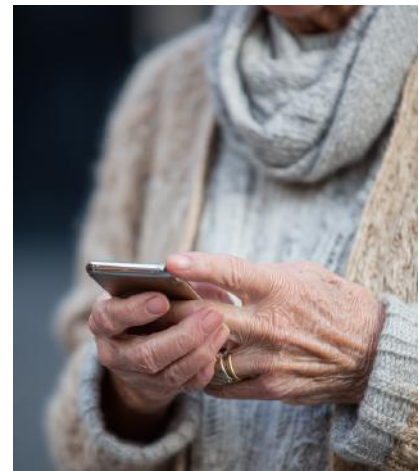
[Find out more](#)



## Support or surveillance? Tracking technologies and older people.

The new tracking and monitoring technologies can support older people's safety and security, but they can also be used for control or privacy invasion.

[Read the article](#)



## CALL 1800 ELDERHelp ( 1800353 374 )

This free number will redirect you to an existing phone service near you.  
This is not a 24-hour line. Call operating times will vary.

In an emergency call 000

A collaboration between the Australian, state and territory governments.  
<https://www.compass.info/>

## Support at Home Survey: Tell us about your experiences

One of the major topics attracting attention is the transition to the new Support at Home program, which replaced the Home Care Package system.

Many residents are understandably trying to navigate their way through these changes. This has impacted those who already receive services, residents who are in the process of applying, and those who expect to need support in the near future.

While the reforms are designed to simplify the system and provide more flexibility for older Australians wishing to remain independent at home, there is still considerable uncertainty among residents.

Questions continue to arise about future fees and contributions, service availability, waiting times, and whether people will ultimately be better or worse off under the new arrangements.

For retirement village residents, the issue is particularly important because villages are increasingly becoming communities where residents age in place for longer periods of time.

Access to reliable home support services can make a major difference to a resident's ability to remain independent and connected within their village community.

The RVRA continues to encourage residents to educate themselves about the new scheme and to ask questions of providers and government agencies where information is unclear.



We have designed a survey, in conjunction with other state RVAs, to gauge what is happening in retirement villages across the country. If you have not done the survey yet you can participate by clicking the link below.

[Support at Home Survey](#)



The report will be available late June and the results will be provided on the RVRA website: [rvra.org.au](https://www.rvra.org.au).

We will continue to provide updates, articles and educational sessions to help residents better understand the evolving system.

# Understanding AI: A Practical Introduction for Residents

Artificial intelligence (AI) is already becoming part of everyday life, often in ways we may not even notice. This article explains, in simple terms, how AI may be useful for retirement village residents — and how to use it safely.

Artificial intelligence is a type of computer technology that can help answer questions, organise information, recognise patterns and carry out tasks.

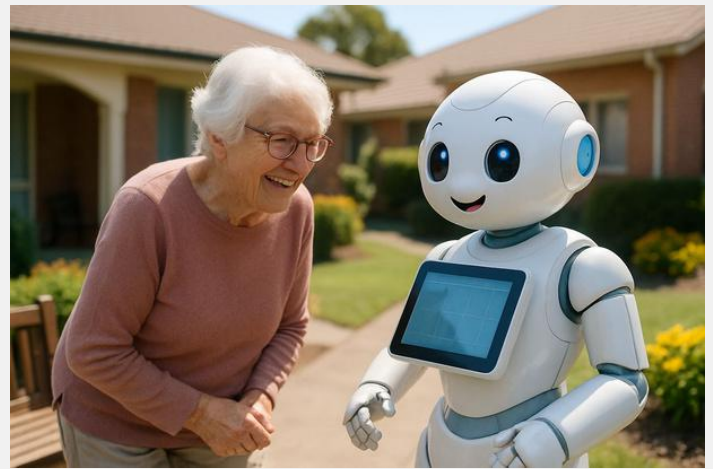
It is already part of everyday life for many people, even when they do not realise it. AI is being used in mobile phones, online searches, navigation apps, banking systems, medical devices, voice assistants and customer service tools.

For retirement village residents, one of the most useful aspects of AI is the way it can help people stay connected, informed and mentally active. AI can read text aloud, suggest music, help write letters, explain unfamiliar terms, or provide ideas for hobbies, travel planning, family history writing and other personal interests.

For some residents, it may become a useful tool for learning, creativity, and communication, particularly for those who may not find technology easy to use.

AI can also be helpful in practical day-to-day ways. Voice-activated assistants, such as smart speakers or phone assistants, can be used to ask questions, set reminders, check the weather, play music, make shopping lists, or control some household devices if they are connected to the system.

This can be particularly useful for people with mobility limitations or vision difficulties.



There are also ways in which AI can support health and safety. Some wearable devices can monitor activity, heart rate, sleep patterns or falls. Other AI tools can help remind people to take medication, attend appointments, or keep track of daily routines.

These tools do not replace doctors, family members or carers, but they may provide extra support and reassurance when used appropriately.

However, AI should be used with care. You should avoid entering private information such as banking details, passwords, Medicare numbers, medical records or personal financial information into AI tools unless they are certain the service is secure and appropriate.



# Understanding AI: A Practical Introduction for Residents

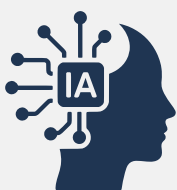
AI can also make mistakes, so important information about health, finances, legal matters or contracts should always be checked with a qualified person.

You should also be alert to scams, as criminals may use AI to create convincing emails, messages or phone calls.

Used carefully, AI can be a helpful tool. It is not a replacement for human judgement, personal contact or professional advice, but it can provide useful support in everyday life.

**Len Mahemoff OAM**  
**Director – RVRA**

*This article was prepared with the assistance of AI*



## Uses for AI in Everyday Life

Artificial intelligence is often spoken about as if it belongs only in the world of business or technology. In reality, it can be a useful everyday helper for retirees too.

You do not need to be “tech savvy” to try it. Tools such as ChatGPT can answer questions, suggest ideas, explain things in plain English, and help with practical tasks.

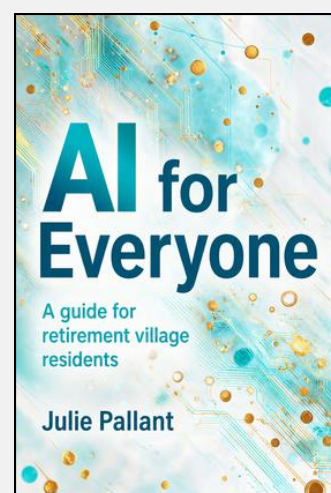
For example, you might use AI to:

- plan a holiday itinerary or compare travel options
- suggest recipes using ingredients already in your fridge
- draft letters, emails, complaints, or meeting notes
- explain medical, legal, or financial terms in simpler language

- create quizzes, poems, family stories, or birthday speeches
- suggest activities for grandchildren or visiting family
- help organise information before a residents’ committee meeting

If you would like to learn how to use ChatGPT click the button below to access a free step-by-step guide.

This was written specifically for retirement village residents.



[AI for Everyone](#)



# Men's Health? We can do that!

Staying mobile and keeping in touch makes for a good day in a retirement village. **International Men's Health Week** runs from June 15 to 21 this year. It's a great time for men living in retirement villages to take stock of what they need to do to keep mobile and stave off any feelings of isolation.

Four of Closebourne Village's residents - two Trevors, an Alan and a Namejs, ditched the "she'll be right" attitude long ago, saw the GP and set themselves up for a better lifespan.

Each man moved to a Retirement Village for pretty much the same reasons; a better lifestyle, no mowing, less home maintenance and a good night's sleep. For Trevor McGowan-Slee and Namejs Jaunalksnis, it was a welcome shift away from the endless 'to do' lists and work deadlines.

Drifting into a retirement lifestyle can mean less mobility. Trevor Nye recognised this, *"It can be a problem because I don't go to work, so I don't have that routine."* It's also that stage of life where the human machine might need a few tweaks. Namejs has some back and knee issues, but that hasn't stopped him from checking out the village art classes and joining Closebourne Sings, the village choir. *"I still exercise, walk and do hydrotherapy a few times a week"*.



Namejs - Cruising with style

Namejs rides a scooter – he does it in style, turning heads throughout the village. His Pride Easyrider Scooter resembles the Harley-Davidson cruisers with motorbike handlebars, chrome mudguards and thick motorbike-styled tyres. We all want one!! He's got a leather jacket, too.

The two Trevors, Alan and Namejs are doers. Their philosophy? You don't need to do much – just don't do nothing. Trevor McGowan-Slee drives the village bus and uses his Sibelius computer program to create accompaniments for the choir.



Trevor - Creating and Connecting



Alan - I can, so can you

Alan is the village photographer and organises the walking group. Namejs and the choir are working towards the next village concert, and he is trialling acrylics to paint landscapes and portraits.



# Men's Health? We can do that!

Trevor Nye is Chair of the Residents Committee. Having worked in the construction industry, he developed some pretty decent skills and is putting them to good use in the village.



*Trevor - Building understanding*

By engaging actively in their village, the men keep in touch. They attend functions with their wives, and join the men's groups for a walk and talk. They're making a difference in their community, and most importantly, to their own health and well-being.

Staying active, connected and in control isn't about age, it's about the choices we make each day. You don't stop being independent because you move into a retirement village, you just do it differently.

**Denise McGowan-Slee**  
**RVRA Board Member**



**Be Connected**  
Every Australian online.

Be Connected is a joint initiative between the Department of Social Services, eSafety and Good Things Foundation to increase the confidence, skills and online safety of older Australians.

## Free Online Presentations - June Topics

- 11th June Managing your emails safely
- 16th June Protecting your personal information online
- 23rd June Protect yourself against scams

**Be Connected**



# Annual Budget - Frequently Asked Questions

At this time of year, many retirement village residents will receive the proposed Annual Budget from their village manager and may be asked to review, discuss or vote on the proposed increases and expenditure.

The RVRA often receives questions about whether residents need to vote, what they can ask about, and what happens if the budget is rejected.



## 1. Do we need to vote on our Annual Budget?

This depends on what your village contract says about increases to your recurrent charges. Recurrent charges are the regular fees residents pay for the day-to-day running of the village, such as gardening, cleaning, administration, insurance and maintenance.

If your contract says your recurrent charges increase by a **fixed formula** (CPI or changes to the aged pension) residents do not need to vote on the budget increase. You may still need to vote on the appointment of the village auditor.

If your contract **does not use a fixed formula**, different rules apply:

- If the proposed increase is the same as, or lower than, the relevant CPI increase, residents are treated under the law as having agreed to the increase. This means a vote is not required, although a vote on the auditor may be required.
- This year, the relevant CPI increase is 3.7% for villages using the December CPI figure, and 4.4% for villages using the March CPI figure.
- If the proposed increase is higher than the relevant CPI figure, residents must vote on both the increase in recurrent charges and the spending set out in the Annual Budget.



## 2. Can residents ask questions about the budget?

Yes. Residents are entitled to ask reasonable questions about the budget, especially if there are large increases, new costs, or items that are unclear.

Usually, these questions are asked by the Residents Committee, the Treasurer, or a Finance Sub-committee. If there is no Residents Committee, an interested resident may be able to ask questions.

Residents may ask questions such as: *What does this item cover? Why has this cost increased? Is this expense necessary? Is it a regular cost or a one-off cost?*

Residents can also examine the Annual Capital Maintenance Report, which should be provided with the budget. This report helps explain maintenance work that is planned.

Residents may also ask questions about any proposed use of money from the Capital Works Fund, where resident agreement is required.

The main point is that residents do not have to accept unclear budget items without asking for more information.

## 3. What happens if residents reject the Annual Budget?

If a vote is required, residents usually vote first on the proposed increase in recurrent charges. They then vote on the expenditure in the Annual Budget.

Residents may approve the increase in charges but still reject the budget spending. This means residents accept that more money may be needed, but they are not happy with how the money is proposed to be spent.

If residents reject the increase in recurrent charges, the budget is also treated as rejected. They need to be clear about their reasons. It is not enough to simply say “no”. Residents must identify the specific budget items they are concerned about. The operator must be told the result of the vote by 31st May.

These concerns are then discussed with the operator, usually through the Residents Committee or the person reviewing the budget on behalf of residents. The aim is to reach a better outcome for residents.

The operator may ask residents to consider an amended budget. If residents do not consent to the amended budget, the operator or a resident may apply to NCAT, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, for an order about the proposed expenditure. NCAT can direct the parties to take steps to try to resolve the dispute, recommend changes, approve the proposed expenditure, or order different expenditure amounts.

Next month, we will look at common questions that arise after the Annual Budget has been passed.

# Village Initiatives

## Celebrating Palm Lake Resort Authors

At Palm Lake Resort Ballina recently residents gathered for something a little different, and truly inspiring, a “*Celebration of Authors*” event showcasing the remarkable literary talent living within the village community.

The work of nine resident authors was celebrated, each sharing the story behind their published works and the journeys that led them to put pen to paper.

The event attracted over 100 people and was opened by the Mayor of Ballina.



The books covered a wide range of genres and interests, including gripping crime fiction, inspirational gift books, family histories and biographies. One resident, Col Lee, spoke about his book *Turning of the Tide*, that documented the resilience and recovery from the devastating 2022 Lismore floods.

What made the event especially meaningful was the personal stories behind the books themselves. Writing is often viewed as a solitary pursuit, however this event demonstrated how storytelling can bring communities together and create powerful connections between people.

One particularly moving moment came when resident author Carol, whose book explored four generations of grandmothers, shared publicly that she wrote the book while living with Parkinson’s disease.

Her message resonated deeply. Despite life’s challenges, she explained, it is still possible to create, contribute and achieve meaningful goals.

Carol's story captured the spirit of the event — that retirement villages are not simply places where people live, but communities filled with talent, wisdom, creativity and ongoing achievement.

The event also reminded residents that later life can be a time of new beginnings rather than winding down. Many people discover new passions after retirement, while others finally find time to complete long-held projects and ambitions.

Events such as this provide more than entertainment. They foster connection, encourage participation and celebrate the extraordinary experiences and abilities within retirement village communities across Australia.

The success of the “Celebration of Authors” event at Palm Lake Resort demonstrated that every village has stories worth telling.

**It is never too late,  
you are never too old!**

# Help Support YOUR Association

The RVRA exists to represent and support retirement village residents across New South Wales. Our work is made possible by the commitment of members and supporters who believe residents deserve clear information, fair treatment and a strong collective voice.

If you are already a member, thank you. Your support helps us continue advocating for better protections, responding to resident concerns, engaging with government and operators, and providing information to help residents understand their rights.

If you are not yet a member, we warmly encourage you to join. A stronger membership gives the RVRA greater influence when speaking on behalf of residents.

To join the RVRA please use the link below:

[Join the RVRA](#)



You can also support our work by making a donation. Every contribution, large or small, helps the RVRA remain independent and active in representing the interests of retirement village residents.

The RVRA is a Registered Charity so all donations are tax deductible.



To donate use the link below:

[Donate](#)



The RVRA appreciates the support of the following professional services organisations.



HILL & CO LAWYERS



ShohmelianLegal

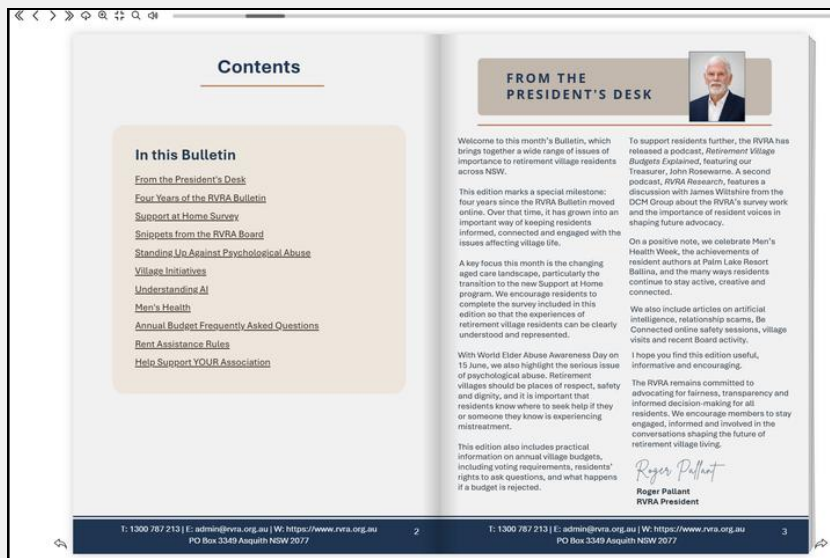
Thank you for supporting the RVRA and helping us work towards retirement villages that are fair, respectful and well managed.



# Feedback on the Flipbook Format

This month's the Bulletin has been made available in two formats:

- Flipbook
- PDF downloaded from the RVRA website



We would love to get your feedback on the new Flipbook version of the Bulletin. Please click the button below to complete a short survey and to give your rating of this new format that we are trialling.



[Give us feedback](#)

If you are reading this as a PDF that you downloaded from the RVRA website we would encourage you to try the new format that allows to you read the Bulletin as a magazine, flipping through the pages, rather than scrolling down the page. You can access it using the button below:

[Flipbook](#)