



RETIREMENT LIVING

# CODE OF CONDUCT

Setting a new level of standards for retirement communities in Australia.

Information for retirement community operators.





# Introducing the Code

**The Retirement Living Code of Conduct aims to set and maintain high standards in the marketing, selling and operation of retirement communities, including complaints and dispute management procedures for operators and residents.**

The Code has been developed by retirement living operators, working with residents, and endorsed by the Property Council of Australia and Leading Age Services Australia (LASA).

Each community operator that signs up to the Code of Conduct commits to standards that govern a resident's experience moving into, living in and moving out of a retirement community.

Code compliance will be overseen by an independent Code Review Panel, which will work with the administrator to ensure the Code is effective and enhances the reputation of the industry. This panel will contain representatives from both industry and residents.

## Standards covered by the Code



### GENERAL PROVISIONS

Including compliance with the Code and responsive and transparent framework for complaints



### LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

Managing staff and facilities effectively, clear policies, and inviting resident feedback on operations



### MOVING INTO THE COMMUNITY

Including accuracy in selling and marketing, clear contracts and effective orientation.



### LEAVING THE COMMUNITY

Communicating clearly with residents (or their families/ representatives) about the re-sale process

## HOW DOES THE CODE WORK?

The Code of Conduct is a voluntary industry code with independent governance where:

- › Operators conduct a self-assessment of their retirement community against the provisions of the Code.
- › If they satisfy the provisions, they can formally sign up to the Code (becoming a 'Code signatory') which commits them to upholding the Code of Conduct.
- › All Code signatories are listed on a publicly available register at [www.awisemove.com.au](http://www.awisemove.com.au), where members of the public and operators can search for communities that are signatories to the Code, and find out how to access a formal complaints management process with referrals to independent dispute resolution services where required.
- › An independent Code Administrator and Code Review Panel have oversight of the Code of Conduct. This includes managing the public register, the complaints and breach process, and undertaking compliance audits and investigations.

## DOES THE CODE OF CONDUCT EQUAL ACCREDITATION?

The Code of Conduct and the recently introduced Australian Retirement Village Accreditation Scheme (ARVAS) both promote high standards in the retirement sector, but they have important differences.

The Code of Conduct is a **self-assessment** against standards, whereas ARVAS accreditation is an **independent, third party assessment of business processes** against standards, including adherence to the Code of Conduct.

Operators who are a signatory to the Code of Conduct can pursue ARVAS accreditation but being a signatory to the Code of Conduct does not automatically mean a community has formal accreditation.

## BENEFITS TO RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

- › Retirement community operators who sign up to the Code of Conduct will be listed on [www.awisemove.com.au](http://www.awisemove.com.au) as a signatory, enabling current and prospective residents to easily identify them when making their decision to move to a community.
- › Signatories can also use the Retirement Living Code of Conduct seal in their marketing materials and within their communities, to acknowledge their commitment to the Code's standards.
- › The Code provides a complaint management framework, including an independent dispute resolution service, to assist the speedy and cost-effective resolution of complaints where possible.
- › Code signatories will have developed consistent and transparent complaints and dispute management systems that have the support of the Code and its framework.

## BENEFITS TO RESIDENTS

- › Members of the public will be able to see if their retirement community, a community they are considering moving into, or the community of a family member or friend, is signed up to the Code at [www.awisemove.com.au](http://www.awisemove.com.au)
- › Individuals have the assurance of knowing there is a formal complaints management service – with the option to remain anonymous – and escalation to an appropriate independent dispute resolution service where required.
- › Many Code signatories will be working towards ARVAS accreditation, which promotes an even higher standard of operations in retirement communities.

# Next steps

## When is the Code being introduced?

The Code is in operation from 1 January 2020. It becomes effective in a retirement community when the operator registers for the Code and certifies its compliance.

## Is there a cost for subscribing to the Code?

There is an annual cost to subscribe to the Code of Conduct. The fee has been set at a level that makes it manageable for any retirement community operator, regardless of size, to subscribe to the Code of Conduct.

The annual cost (including GST) of subscribing to the Code is:

- › \$220 per village + \$2.75 per unit operated (members) + \$110 one-off application fee
- › \$550 per village + \$6.88 per unit operated (non-members) + \$275 one-off application fee

All subscription fees will be invested into the Code's supporting infrastructure, including a Code Administrator and the Code Review Panel.

## Sign up to the Code

For more information, to download a copy or to sign up to the Code of Conduct visit the operator website: [www.retirementlivingcode.com.au](http://www.retirementlivingcode.com.au).

